

No.
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DC COMICS

★ COMICS ★ MOVIES ★ ANIMATION ★ NEWS & REVIEWS ★ BEHIND THE SCENES ★ MAY 1975 ★ \$1.50

Special
JOE ORLANDO
ISSUE!





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OUR COVER: The multi-faceted (and faced) Joe Orlando in a self portrait.

INSIDE FRONT: A swamp creature drawn by Berni Wrightson two years before the first SWAMP THING story.

CENTERSPREAD: The rejected version of the cover for SWAMP THING #15 by Nestor Redondo.

BACK COVER: An unused cover done by Alex Toth.



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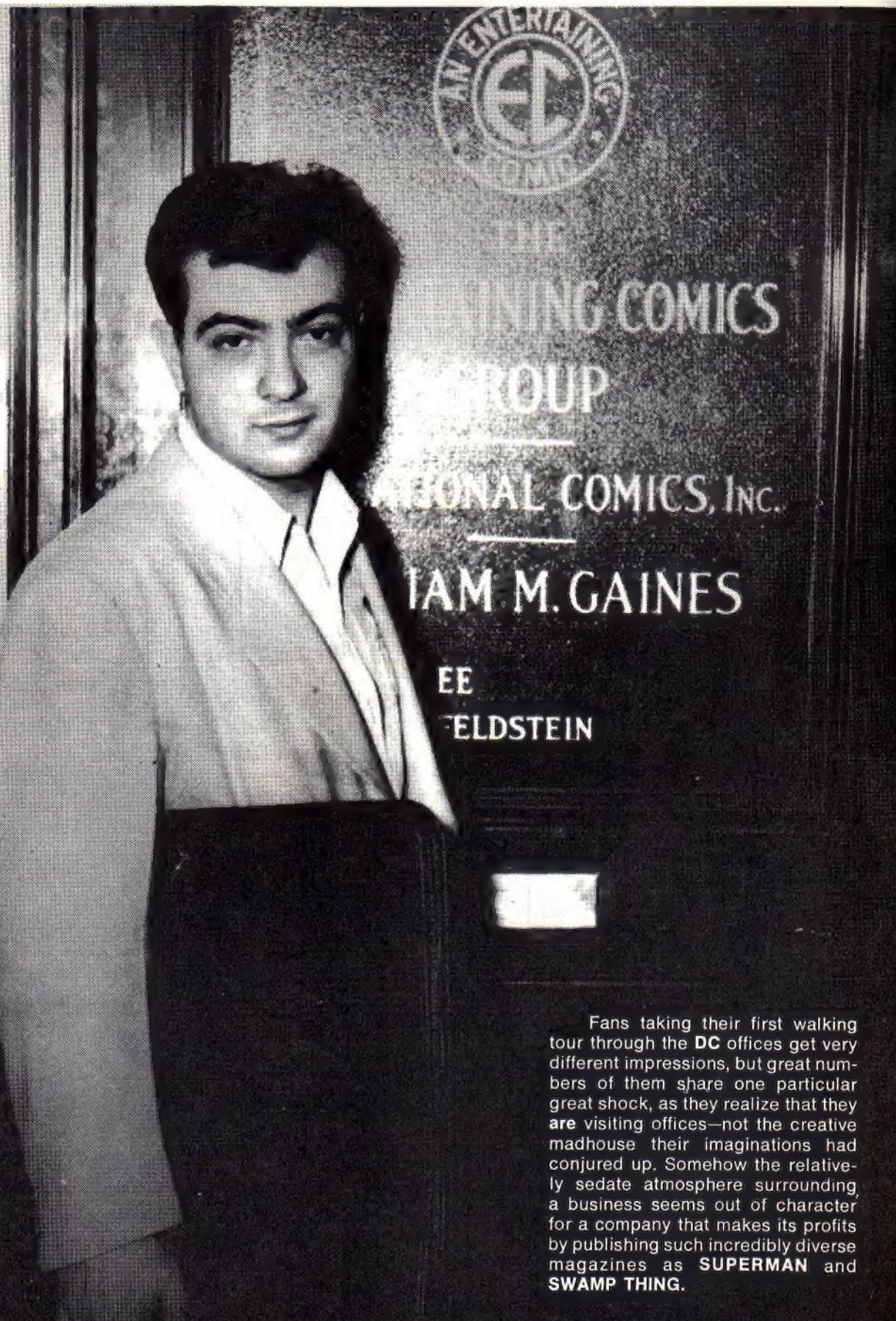
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THE MANY WORLDS OF JOE Q

CONVERSATIONS CONDUCTED AND EDITED BY PAUL LEVITZ



Fans taking their first walking tour through the DC offices get very different impressions, but great numbers of them share one particular great shock, as they realize that they **are** visiting offices—not the creative madhouse their imaginations had conjured up. Somehow the relatively sedate atmosphere surrounding a business seems out of character for a company that makes its profits by publishing such incredibly diverse magazines as **SUPERMAN** and **SWAMP THING**.

Yet sometimes that dignified mask slips a bit, and a glimmer of the insanity beneath begins to shine through. For comics creators are aware of their half-breed status, standing on the brink between the reality of the office world and the improbability of their own private universes. And more often than not, when that mask slips off, it's as a result of an action of a man more precariously perched on the brink of his various realities—a man who not only must coordinate the administrative and creative tasks involved in editing a phenomenal 19 titles, but who also has to balance an unusually multi-faceted private life as a painter, writer, cartoonist and commercial artist. With this complex backdrop in place, it no longer is quite so surprising that the same man conducts solemn luncheons with artists of international repute, then returns to the office and reminds his co-workers that they are indeed publishing fantasy-oriented magazines by introducing them to a turtle that's visiting him that afternoon.

So enter then these diverse dimensions, the many worlds of Joe Orlando . . .

The best place to begin is usually the beginning — so if you would shift yourself back in time to your pre-professional days . . .

I suppose my career started in 1941 when I chose to go to high school to specialize in art training. That was at the School of Industrial Arts (now the High School of Art & Design), which was almost a breeding ground for comic artists in those days. Carmine and Frank Giacoia had been through there a couple of years before, and I know Alex Toth was there at the same time as I was. He was one year behind me, and unfortunately I didn't get to know him until after we were out of school.

I've had the opportunity to work with a number of my classmates over the years. Rocke Mastroserio and I were both working for Charlton and Warren in the sixties, and I became reacquainted with Gaspar Saladino when I came to work for DC. Gaspar stayed with the industrial arts and is now probably the best letterer in comics, although when I first knew him he was an art student. I recall a strip entitled "The X-Man" that he did in school.

What artistic ambitions led you to the School of Industrial Arts?

I couldn't imagine myself doing anything but art . . . I never envisioned myself spending as much of my time away from the drawing board as I do now. I felt that art was the only thing I was really able to do because I wasn't very good at anything else; from grammar school on, I always tried to avoid my other classes by volunteering to do drawings for all the clubs — backgrounds, Turkeys, Santas, and so on.

Did you do any professional work while you were in school?

Not really. The first art I did that was printed was done at that time, but it was a non-paying assignment, so I don't consider it professional. The illustrations were for a high school reader that's still in use, and I did



some sketches of Mark Twain's *The Prince And The Pauper*. Alex also contributed to this project, and so did a fellow named Guy Fraumeni, who is now a prominent art director for TV.

So you didn't get into comics until after graduation . . .

Way after, because the army snatched me up as soon as I left school. The closest I got to art in the army was stenciling boxcars in Germany.

After I was discharged, I signed up at the Art Students' League, where I was exposed to different artistic points of view. At that time I was planning to become an illustrator in the Norman Rockwell school, not a cartoonist. But illustration dried up with the rising use of photography, and I had to change my orientation.

Was it at this point that you decided to get involved in comic art?

I really got into comics accidentally. My father was talking to the elevator operator in the building where he worked, complaining about my being home from the army, out of work, and goofing off by drawing. The elevator operator was sympathetic, and set up an interview for me at Lloyd Jacquet, which was one of the early comics-packaging studios. They would create entire magazines there and market them to publishers—in fact, in a sense they were the original **MARVEL COMICS**, because they packaged **MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS** #1, which introduced **Sub-Mariner** and **The Human Torch**.

What sort of stories did you work on, since it's safe to assume that men like Bill Everett and Carl Burgos did the more famous characters?

My first job was in 1949, on a strip called **Chuck White**, which was a Catholic-oriented series done for **TREASURE CHEST** magazine. It was a fairly adult story, dealing with divorced parents of different religious persuasions and Catholic moral positions.

I was getting something like nine dollars a page for pencils and inks, and the joy of getting that first art check is absolutely unbelievable. I was standing outside the studio with my check, but I was also on cloud nine—I just kept on looking at the first real money for artwork. I just got on the first bus that came along, rode up and down 5th Ave. staring at my check and I didn't even care where the bus was going. I figured I had the world by the tail.

The feeling I had at the time was "Oh, My God! The power! You can create money with blank pieces of paper!" I couldn't get over it—for about a month. Then I went through the change that happens to us all as time goes by, I began to feel that the money was coming to me, and that it's never enough. That thrill occurs just once in your lifetime, and it's a great feeling.

The studios of the forties and fifties are famous for their friendly and cooperative atmosphere. Do you have any particularly fond memories of friends from that period?

I met Tex Blaisdell at Lloyd Jaquet, and we've since worked together on more projects in more ways than I can remember. And when I started to freelance for another art studio run by a man by the name of Epworth, that is where I met Wally Wood.

Now that conjures up memories of your almost legendary teamwork at E.C....

At that time, Woody had the E.C. account, but I was working on other publishers, like **Avon**. The only outfit we both worked for was **Fox**, and in fact, we were both stuck for a lot of money when **Fox** went bankrupt.

We started working as a team because he liked my drawing and I was just knocked out by his inking. He would never do a finished drawing—he would just ink his layouts and it would come out looking like the greatest finished art I had seen. I was always impressed by what he was able to do with my drawings—he gave it a quality that I could never do for myself.

At the time he was doing primarily war stories for Harvey Kurtzman and I was doing occasional backgrounds. Then Woody told me that they were looking for other artists and that since they loved his work so much, they were looking for another Wally Wood. Since I was already working with him, I just used his approach and did up a set of samples.

I got my first story on the basis of my pencilling—and I really sweated out that inking job. I hated my inking and was sure I'd get fired when I brought it in. And I looked into Feldstein's face and he said, "Terrific—we have another Wally Wood." I couldn't believe it.

From that point on I was a regular artist, getting a job of six or seven pages every two weeks. We were making about \$25 a page, which was pretty good money at the time.

The E.C. mystique involved much more than just the page rate—what were some of the things that made their magazines so special?

For the first time, we (the artists) were working with intelligent people putting out Intelligent products. They really cared about what they were doing. They had a high regard for their writers and artists and that gave the people a sense of security.



Here's Sergio Aragones' version of one of the many outings Joe Orlando and his publisher/pal Bill Gaines made to the best restaurants in Paris. While on one of the now famous MAD trips, Joe and Bill would eat 4 or 5 times a day! They went from restaurant to restaurant, always ordering the speciality of the house—with appropriate wines, of course! Yep—they've been on a very strict diet since (. . . but it hasn't helped!)

The atmosphere was unique—we received the storyboards shapes and with already placed balloons. We had to make the remaining space interesting.

Everything was special—I met Bill Gaines, a real-live publisher, which was an unbelieveable event. As a working cartoonist you never met a publisher, editors were the limit. The first thing Bill asked me after introducing himself was if I was married. His philosophy was that a married artist would be more responsible about deadlines, since he had more fixed expenses.

Today I find myself agreeing with Bill, since I'm on the other side of the desk I've discovered that married people are far more responsible. Unfortunately, with the modern social outlook about marriage, you can't find a married artist! They're all living with their women without benefit of clergy and the women are paying the bills. This gives the artist time to think about what kind of work he really wants to do. Unfortunately some of the greatest art work I've seen in recent years has been all in the thinking stage.

Good days, but like all good things, E.C. ended. Where did you turn then? I had been working pretty exclusively for E.C., but not for MAD, which was the only remaining mag there. So I

went out with my portfolio and I picked up assignments right away from **Classics Comics**. Then I went to **Marvel**, and was hired right away by Stan Lee. He put me on horror stuff, but the scripts unfortunately never had the quality that the E.C. stories did. Therefore the art never made that much of an impact, proving to me that the scripting is more important than the art. The artist can be inspired or turned off by the story he's assigned.

I did advertising assignments from time to time, so I never really was hurting for work. I also used some of my time to go back to school. I took an art course with Frank Riley and, looking back today, I'm sorry I didn't study with him when I got out of the army. That man knew how to put a picture together.

You seem to be quite a proponent of art education.

Very much so. While studying with Frank Riley, I found that he was giving away all the things that were so painfully learned by me while I was drawing for E.C.: hints and clues . . . methods which helped develop the ability to come up with ideas. As an artist you have to work as a problem solver, the kind of training that enables an artist to come up with visual answers to problems. A real money-making asset.

That also helped a couple of years later when I went back to E.C. and started working on MAD—where they take almost the exact opposite approach to the usual comic script. On MAD assignments you received script and copy, and verbal art directions. You went home and came up with funny visuals, the criteria always being "is it funny?" great training.

Your return to MAD brings us to the sixties, which was a rather hectic chapter in your history, wasn't it?

Well, besides MAD, I did some work for Stan Lee on DAREDEVIL, helped in the original development of CREEPY for Jim Warren. When CREEPY came out it had (my most unusual credit line to date "Story Ideas: Joe Orlando" notation on the credits of CREEPY #1), I was also working in a studio set-up with Vince Colletta. Then I came to DC.

You started to work for DC very late in your career, compared to some of your contemporaries. Were you avoiding the company, or was it just as a result of circumstances?

National (DC) was always something special in my mind. . . . Even though I had worked for E.C., and then for MAD, which was a really big publishing bombshell in the fifties and sixties, I felt that I hadn't quite made it 'cause I wasn't working for National. There were some really big stars there: Alex Toth, Carmine Infantino, Gil Kane . . . I always wanted to be in their league. I was very happy to



Deadline doom approaches as Orlando and mentor Wally Wood team up to produce a single page in half the time.

get my first job here just for my own personal satisfaction . . . now I could say that I worked for "National."

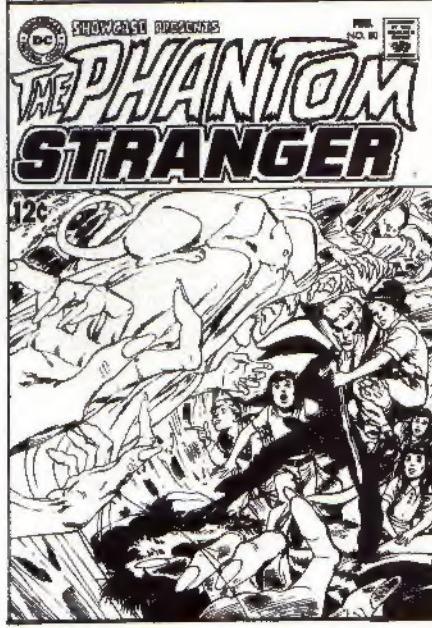
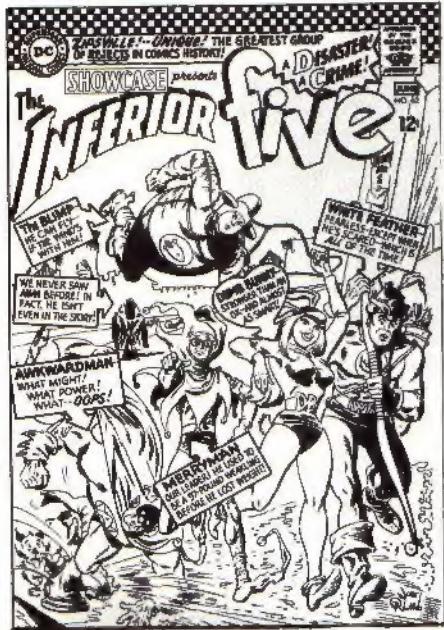
Did you achieve this ambition through showing your samples around or was by a personal introduction, or . . . ?

Actually, I was introduced to editor Jack Miller by Nelson Bridwell. It was Nelson who suggested me when they were looking for an artist to do the Inferior Five series he was writing. He knew my work from MAD since he was a fellow contributor and so I made up samples for Miller.

You only worked for DC as an artist for a short time, doing INFERIOR FIVE and SCOOTER for about two years, both for Miller. How did you make the then-unique transition from artist to editor?

After I'd been working for Miller for about a year and a half, I noticed an artist working in the corner of Miller's office. Pretty soon this guy was coming over when I delivered my work and was giving advice and criticism. He didn't seem to have any official authority at the time, but he was a pretty good artist, and so I listened to him and we began to become friends.

He showed me what he was working on (a Deadman story), and I began to go over my stuff with him. We developed a healthy respect for each other's opinions. Several months later, when Jack Leibowitz, who was then the publisher, offered my friend the position of Editorial Director, Carmine brought me in as an editor.





Was there any change in the atmosphere up at DC? Up to this time there had been a static group of writer/editors, and now there was a sudden influx of artist/editors!

Carmine brought in Dick Giordano, who had been an editor and artist at Charlton, Joe Kubert, who had been strictly an artist on DC's war line for the past ten years or so, and myself. And we were all the new kids on the block.

It was a very frightening experience. It was like walking into a bank and asking for a loan without any collateral. The analogy being that I didn't have any collateral as an editor and here I was sitting behind a desk making decisions. I'd hear whispered things like "this won't last long".

Where did you start to prove yourself?

My first two assignments were **THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY** and **SCOOTER**, both of which I took over from other editors who were leaving the company.

When I started, **HOUSE OF MYSTERY** was a minor part of the logo, and the book was really **Dial H For Hero**, a science-fiction super-hero series. I immediately changed the logo to make **HOUSE OF MYSTERY** more prominent, and to make it a

mystery book. In fact, I don't know if we should mention the word horror because it seems to be a dirty word in this business—but modeled it after the old horror books . . . primarily because I knew from my E.C. experience that the horror books were carrying the company. The science-fiction books were strictly for the fun of it.

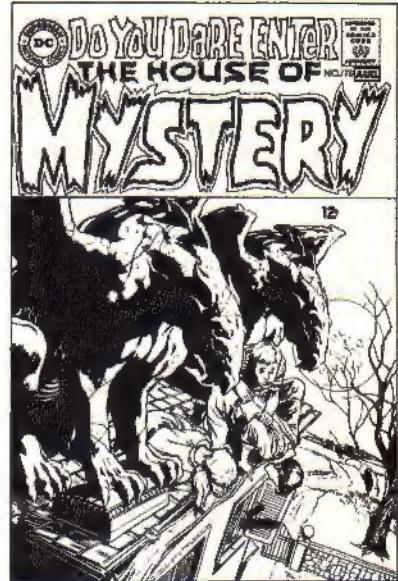
I worked within the code by looking for its openings, not its restrictions, and gradually developed my own limits by starting with simple monster stories. In fact, the first couple of issues even used old DC reprints of their very tame '50s monster stuff.

How did you develop a staff for **HOUSE OF MYSTERY, since the horror artists and writers weren't working for DC at the time?**

My principal writer was Jack Oleck, who Bill Gaines recommended to me. Jack had done some work for the E.C. horror line. And of course both Dick Giordano and I spent a lot of our time developing new writers and artists: Len Wein, Marv Wolfman, Berni Wrightson, Mike Kaluta, and so on. In fact, I still have the first story that Len Wein wrote in my inventory. One day I'll get mad at him and publish "The Final Fade Of Frank Farrington" just to annoy him.

Your other assignment was **SCOOTER which was then a story-oriented and character-oriented humor strip. You turned this magazine around too . . .**

It was my decision to use **SCOOTER** to compete with **Archie** from a visual

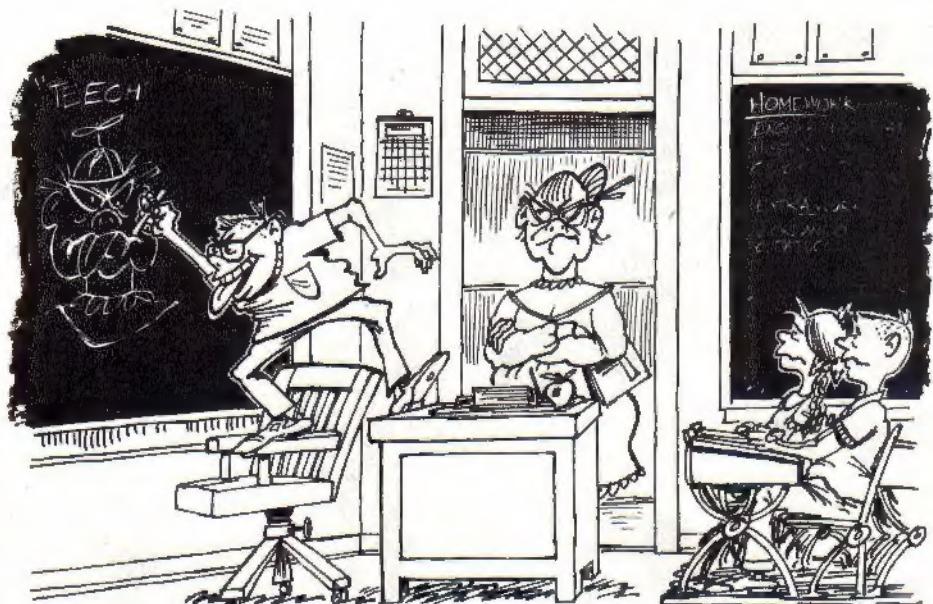


point of view. This was an example of an editorial decision arrived at by an artist, especially since I had been drawing the series previously.

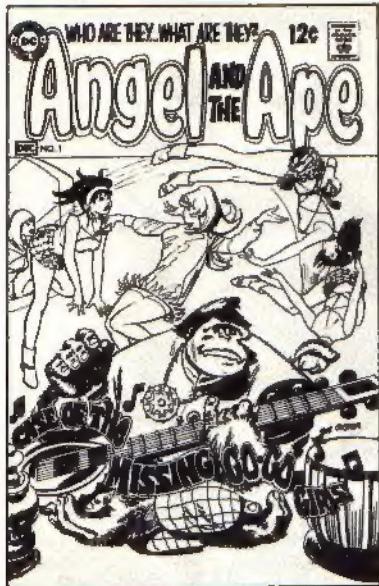
It wasn't the scripts that were the primary problem, although I did take the writing assignment away from Barbara Friedlander, who had been former editor Jack Miller's assistant. I thought she was more oriented towards the romance series, so I shifted her to that. I felt the visuals would allow us to compete better and I don't think a story-oriented editor would have made that decision.

I used Doug Crane and Henry Scarpelli to get the **Archie** look, and I understand that the change shocked the **Archie** people, because they thought they owned that particular art style.

The first writer I got for the book



As a schoolboy, Joe found art to be a simple, yet effective, way of expressing his emotions . . .



was Henry Boltinoff . . . he wasn't really a writer at the time and he was very reluctant to try writing continuity. He considered himself exclusively a gag writer and cartoonist. But I persuaded him to take the assignment because I was interested in working with someone with a good sense of humor. The book sold very well when he took over.

I felt that he was an editorial experiment because I took someone who had not written previously and got some funny scripts out of him. When the book's sales started slipping after a couple of years, and I was told to find a new writer, I repeated the same process with John Albano, who had also been a cartoonist. But by then the humor field was closing up, and we couldn't get the teen magazines to move no matter how hard we tried.

This situation was very similar to that of another magazine I inherited, **STANLEY AND HIS MONSTER**. It was a good concept, except that there was no longer a market for cute kiddie books, which were typical DC fare at the time.

What about the magazines that were created under your control? The only one of those early experiments that still survives is THE PHANTOM STRANGER . . .

At first, **PHANTOM STRANGER** was just reprint material from the '50's with a framing device. I'd sit down with Mike Friedrich or Otto Binder or Wein and Wolfman and we'd weave the two reprints into a new story. It really caused a lot of problems and I couldn't keep the same writer on the book for three issues because of the difficulty of the assignment.

Then Carmine gave me the go-ahead to do new material on the basis of the sales of the first few issues. I called in Bob Kanigher . . . we sat down and talked it out. We discussed the restrictions that have been developed previously by other writers since we weren't starting from scratch. It had been done and was selling as a reprint title, so obviously we had been doing something right and something was commercial. We had to feel out what leeway we could take on our own creative intuition.

What are your fondest memories of that magazine over the years?

I suppose it's all of the people that I worked with on the book. Neal Adams on the covers and the insides at times. All of the different contrib-



butors—it was quite a gallery of people.

I think you've worked with more than a dozen writers on that title.

Really? I guess I cut my teeth on that book, as far as being an editor is concerned. I came to my most difficult decisions on that book . . . telling people that they had been doing a good job on it, but that they just weren't doing it anymore and it was time for a change. I think that was what kept the book alive . . . because it's been a borderline proposition all along.

The most difficult decisions that an editor has to make are those that aren't proveable, except by the sales figures that come in almost a year later. I had to decide partly by instinct, partly by premonition, partly by my likes and dislikes and by the sales figures to make the decision to change the writer.

Also, at the time, I felt that I would get a better book by using more people . . . more people means more ideas. On the other hand, I have since come to believe in the other way of looking at the problem . . . which is if you can develop a writer with a strong style that readers really like, and a similarly strong artist, you really shouldn't change. That book was a very experimental experience in my career.



... and even today editor-artist Orlando has not lost the delicate touch of years past.

What about the other experiments of 1968—the ones that didn't survive? We tried things . . . some didn't work because they were badly done, others failed because the timing was wrong. A lot of things can go wrong . . . in the case of **BAT LASH**, which was probably the most famous of the bunch, it was a very fine property that should never have been illustrated in a humorous style. The humor in the writing was ironic humor, and it was misconstrued by the artist to be the kind of blatant humor that requires funny drawing. But Nick Cardy was very prestigious within DC at the time and I couldn't get what I wanted out of him. Not that his work wasn't brilliant . . . I just felt the direction was wrong.

After the experimentation of 1968/1969, you stayed pretty much within three genres for the next few years—the teen humor mags, the romance titles, and the mystery mags—any other comments on these?

I've always been proud of the hosts in my mystery books. I tried to give them a touch of character . . . felt I couldn't go wrong with the original Biblical names.

Cain, of course, was my first creation. His name always stood for evil,

which gave him the proper horror twinge. Originally I used to write all his dialogue and it was all pseudohip. I was very surprised by the reaction it got from the readers, particularly the girls who associated him with their grandfather.

Abel I created for Dick Giordano and then inherited him back when Dick gave up editing. He was modeled after Mark Hanerfeld, who later served as my assistant for about a year.

Eve was the last of the Biblical three and when I created her, I had in mind the traveling aunt who has been around the world and returned with a slightly tarnished reputation that no one talks about, because of her wealth.

I suppose the Bible had a lot of influence on my concept of storytelling. I used to read it a lot as a child and all of the stories fascinated me. I think you can find any story in the world in it.

Then you are no doubt looking forward to adapting the New Testament to comics form . . .

Yes, but it's a difficult task because so many people have so many different concepts about how it should

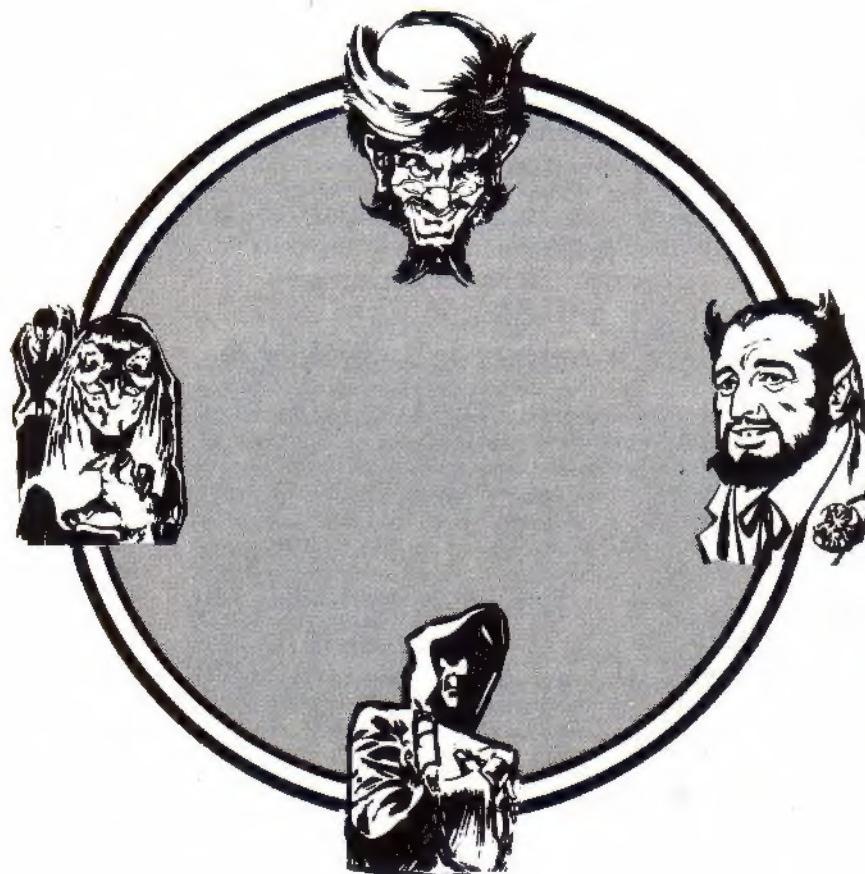


BAT LASH

be done. But despite this, it's a task I will enjoy doing.

In a sense the Bible adaptation represents one of the new directions you've taken as an editor in the last five years. But beginning in the Spring of 1971 you've conquered a number of new fields. Let's talk about them for a while, beginning with the creation of the first successful western in comics since the '50s . . .

Jonah Hex wasn't my first attempt at a western. After **Bat Lash**, I let the field alone for a few years, but when I inherited **ALL-STAR WESTERN** from Dick Giordano, I wanted to try a few things. The first was **Billie The Kid** and that failed . . . which could be because the hero turned out to be a girl and there was a reader resentment of that. Little boys don't like their heroes kissing girls in westerns and they especially don't like their heroes when they turn out to be women.



So I started looking for a new idea with writer John Albano. John came in with the idea of doing a bounty hunter . . . an anti-hero. I didn't mind the bounty hunter part, but I wanted to establish that he was still a good person . . . mean because he had been screwed at one time. So I developed Hex's good side and John developed his mean side and we came together somewhere along the way. Carmine did some sketches, which I passed along to Tony DeZuniga . . . and since everyone in the Philippines adores westerns, he worked out perfectly.



JONAH HEX

Over the three years you've been doing Hex, it's always been a tough task to get the book done—there have been several issues of **ALL-STAR WESTERN/WEIRD WESTERN TALES** without Hex and any number of fill-in issues. Does any one reason account for this?

It needs just the right artist. I think this is probably the most realistic western art ever done in comics . . . up till now we've had the Roy Rogers western in comics. I wanted the real, gritty west and I wanted the art that could do it justice. And I think I've succeeded in a lot of issues.

On the other side of the problem, when John Albano parted company with DC I had to find a new writer. I tried two, Arnold Drake and Michael Fleisher. Arnold turned in an admirable job, but I chose Michael to continue the series. I based my choice on the feeling that Michael brought the same raw, gritty quality to the scripting that I looked for in the art. In retrospect I'm sure I made the right choice, since the book is now a successful monthly.

At the same time you took over **ALL-STAR WESTERN**, you picked up **ADVENTURE COMICS**. In one case you succeeded in making the book work, but in the other all we've seen is a succession of abortive projects—some of which were beautifully done.

Well, **ADVENTURE** is DC's oldest running title . . . it has forty years of comic book history behind it.

When I inherited the title, it wasn't doing too well, and unfortunately it

still hasn't clicked. But I tried and will keep trying new features until something works. When I lost the **Supergirl** feature, I looked at DC's other successful books for ideas. The mysteries were doing well, so my first attempt was the **Adventurer's Club**. It was a mysterious club that admitted only members who had experienced a grand adventure. I tried to combine mystery and high adventure, but that combo didn't work for **ADVENTURE**.

Next I tried a continuing feature, a pirate adventure, in which the hero would be a Carib Indian known as **Capt. Fear**. I was always fascinated by the way the conquistadors wiped out the Indians in the Caribbean, so I thought that might do it. I wanted to play on the then-current interest in the Indians, a conflict of two cultures . . . a lot of grandiose ideas, but that didn't work.

So I called Shelly Mayer, and said, "Hey, Shelly—how about writing a sexy women's lib super-heroine for me? She can stop bullets, fly and we won't tell her origin."

"What do you mean there are no black orchids—just purple? (Expletive deleted)—We'll still call her the **Black Orchid**, it sounds mysterious.

Anyway, that didn't work, but it did gather some vociferous fans. When reading of the **Black Orchid**'s demise, some wealthy unknown fan sent me a beautiful bouquet of orchids with a note: "Bring back the **Black Orchid** or suffer the consequences!" It was very heartwarming, and also very useful—it was my wedding anniversary so I just rewrote the card and made a big hit with my wife

And then I introduced **The Spectre**. I had just been mugged in broad daylight on upper Broadway, where I was living at the time. The feeling of helplessness and anger and loss of manhood (my wife was with me at the time). As I watched the two muggers strutting away with my wallet gave me the Walter Mitty idea of fantasy revenge. "That's what I'll do to you bums, I'll bring back **The Spectre**!" **The Spectre** will rid the world of the evil vermin that preys on upstanding hard-working middle-aged comic book editors.

From the reaction and sales of **ADVENTURE** I have a suspicion that a lot of muggers are reading my book.

And now comes **Aquaman** . . . who knows, someday I'll bring **ADVENTURE** back to the top, or I'll bury it.



During this period you also edited a number of other projects for a short time: the gothic romances in **SINISTER HOUSE OF SECRET LOVE**, **KORAK**, and **JIMMY OLSEN**. But I think we can safely say that a different project marks the milestone at the beginning of the current period in your career—**SWAMP THING**.

SWAMP THING began with my fondness for Otto Binder's **Adam Link**, **Robot** stories and my desire to create a character with a similar alienated feeling. The first story . . . the one in **HOUSE OF SECRETS #92** . . . was done like any other mystery story . . . I talked it out with Len Wein, he wrote it, and I gave it to Berni to draw. But the reader response was so great that I talked Carmine into letting us do it as a book.

How did you come to do the book in what's called the "Marvel Style" of working: plot/art/script?

Frankly, I think it was because Len was so damn busy. And Berni was amenable to it . . . in fact, that was the way he preferred to do it. We were all very enthusiastic about the idea, because this way we would all be able to contribute to it more fully.



What about the problem of replacing Len and Berni when they quit the series?

Len was less of a problem because David Michelinie was waiting in the wings, so to speak. After both departures, there was talk of cancelling the book, but I wanted it to continue. I looked at it as an editorial challenge. I had expected Len's departure several months before, and was watching David's development because of that. But Berni's exit caused

some strange thoughts to run through my head.

Two names came up as possible replacements for Berni before I settled on Nestor Redondo, who I feel was the best possible choice. The first was Arthur Suydam, a young artist who had just started to contribute to our mystery books. He was a little raw, but then, so was Berni when he started. But when I saw his samples, I knew he wasn't it.

And the other was Alex Nino. At that time, I thought the book would die anyway without Berni, so why not go out arty? But Nino kept getting more abstract in his work and I couldn't recognize stories when they came back from him. He could have done it if he really wanted to, but I couldn't take that chance.

Your next experiment was the turning around of an Inherited magazine —**WEIRD WAR TALES**.

War is horror anyway, so I wanted to do a book that concentrated on the horror of war—to show what a nightmare the whole thing is. I combined a lot of what I learned on the mystery books into this one.

JOE ORLANDO THE WRITER

This feature is entitled The Many Worlds of Joe Orlando, so let's shift our sights for a moment and look at a less familiar facet of his career--his work as a wordsmith.

Every humorist has to be a writer--a gag cartoonist's captions have to provide the punchline to compliment the visual effect, so it's not surprising that Joe developed a strong story sense. It's served him well in the years since he's moved away from cartooning, by giving him an ability to twist the plots writers bring in, and change them into more novel ideas. Sometimes he'll even plot a story completely, and break it down for the writer. One of Joe's 5 A.C.B.A. awards was won for his work as a writer/editor on "The Demon Within" (House of Mystery #201), a story he co-authored with John Albano.

But such skills are useful where-

ever creative people are needed, and Joe never is satisfied by staying in conquered territory. In 1973 he moved on to the hectic world of the daily newspaper comic strip, a field he knew from the viewpoint of an artist assisting others on series. But this was a new challenge, as Joe took over the writing chores on Little Orphan Annie in tandem with Michael Fleisher.

Joe would co-plot and break down each story sequence into daily episodes: setting up continuity, and building the story according to the complex needs of a newspaper strip. Then Michael would supply the dialog, which Joe would edit in his time-honored fashion.

College students should also be on the lookout for a series of science textbooks that Joe has worked on as a cartoonist--supplying gags on demand that relate to the individual lessons. That's meshing the writer and artist, so perhaps you should look at a sampler of his art on page 13 next...



You say you know that **PLOP**
is coming... but you don't
know what **PLOP** is?
Is that what's troubling
you, boy?



One of the most interesting things done in **WEIRD WAR TALES** is the book-length novels you've done without any continuing characters or series. I think this was the first time that's been done in an anthology book, except for the gothic series where the length was a part of the format...

One of the books that I am most proud of is the booklength **WEIRD WAR TALES** that Shelly Mayer wrote, in which we took one character and paced him through three wars. Three parts of history—a past war, a relatively contemporary war, and a future war—and we did it with one character and a schtick that tied it in completely.

I really think we've done a lot of good things in **WEIRD WAR TALES**—remember the story where a man almost had to kill Leonardo DaVinci? I think the book is a good book, and the only reason it isn't better is that it's hard to get the right material for it. The single story thing that I'm doing now isn't right for the book... It's an easy way to do it, but the full book concept is the right way.

The next step in your career was creating a new variant on the humor genre. All of the teen humor books that you had been doing had vanished and the horror/mystery books were selling and multiplying—so **PLOP!** was born...

We really told the origin of **PLOP!** in the first issue... all except the one basic concept. I call it "whistling past the graveyard" 'cause when I was a kid I was very scared of ghosts, so I'd use humor and whist-

ling to get safely past a scary situation. Hence, **PLOP!**

And that brings us to your current crop of new titles...

Do you mean the ones I started this winter or the ones I'm going to start this fall?

Both—although it's hard to get completely up date since you refuse to stand still these days. Many of these magazines are new and different, but two specifically bring stories to mind. The first is **SANDMAN**, where you had to take off from an existent Simon & Kirby issue...

SANDMAN was a new direction for me and I didn't have any writers who had done that sort of simplistic super-hero stuff before. I think the only insight I had from that was that you must have a writer who likes the property he's working on. He has to feel for it and strangely enough, Michael Fleisher felt for that type of character, even though all his previous work had been with more brutal and forceful. That series proved to me that Michael could, if he wanted to, write anything that he puts his mind to and likes.





Which brings us to the curious case of CLAW, which started out as WEIRD WORLDS starring a revived version of the Ironwolf character, and went through a brief reincarnation as Iron Jaw.

Coming off his success on SANDMAN, I decided to try Michael on a sword & sorcery series, so I had him read the Ironwolf books and come up with a sequel: He came in with Iron Jaw, which we worked on for a while, and he went home and wrote the fist script. He wanted a Jonah Hex type attitude on the part of the hero, and I wanted strange worlds and a feeling of fantasy. The end product was unlike what either of us expected, and although I bought it, I told Michael that I wouldn't use it.

I gave him the choice of trying it on another market, and he did—taking it to Seaboard where they published it as IRON JAW #1. It was quite successful for them, I believe, but it just wasn't the type of series I was interested in doing.

I went on to try sword & sorcery with David Michelinie instead and we developed CLAW.

That brings us up to date . . . what's coming in the future?

Now that I'm familiar with the war field from WEIRD WAR TALES and STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES, I'm going to try mixing it with sword & sorcery to get HERCULES, and then I'll add a touch of mystery and get WARLORD, and when I add romance and humor . . . •



MARCH 8, 1974 50 CENTS

NEW TIME

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June 10, 1974, 50

New Times IT'S SUPER K!

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JOE ORLANDO THE ARTIST



Editing's an intangible task, and rather hard to illustrate, but here's a tale from the unpublished PLOP! files that should give AWODCC readers a glimpse of Joe Orlando, Editor . . . as well as a very special laugh . . .

"COMIC BOOK" M^CFiend

THE KID WITH ONE MILLION COMIC BOOKS

...C.B. MCFIEND (AS HE'S KNOWN) LIVES, BREATHES...AND ABSORBS COMIC BOOKS!! HE IS THE SOLE OWNER OF OVER ONE MILLION COMIC BOOKS...HE IS OFTEN VISITED BY THE GREAT COMIC BOOK SPIRIT...

THE GREAT COMIC BOOK SPIRIT HAS ENDOWED C.B. WITH THE ABILITY TO CHANGE TO ANY COMIC BOOK CHARACTER HE DESIRES... MERELY BY YELLING OUT... (BELIEVE IT OR NOT)... "PLOP!"

STORY - D. EDWING
ART - D. MANAK
EDITOR - J. ORLANDO

YIPE!

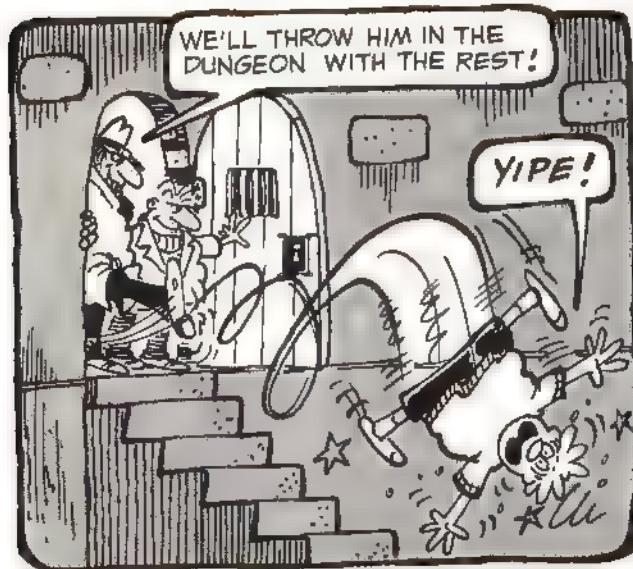
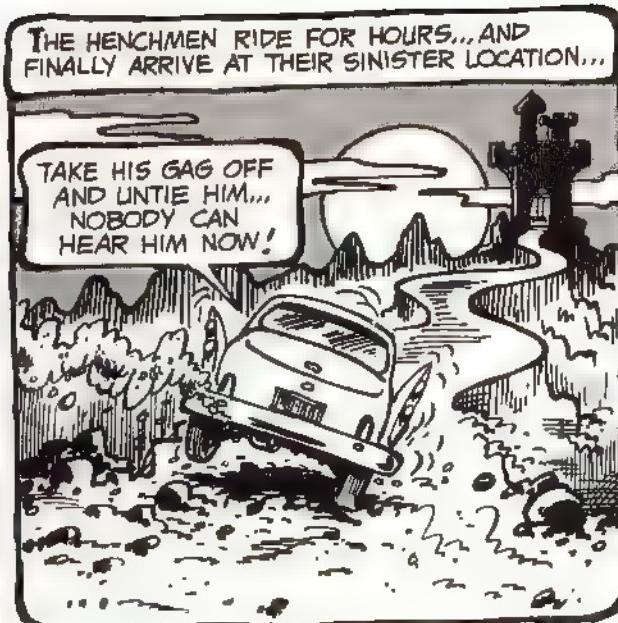
THIS EPISODE...
THE COLLECTOR

"COMIC BOOK" MCFIEND IS RUNNING HOME WITH A NEW COMIC FOR HIS COLLECTION... BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT LURKS AHEAD...

HEH, HEH... THERE HE IS! GRAB HIM!

GOT HIM!

...AND I HAVE HIS COMIC... HEH, HEH...

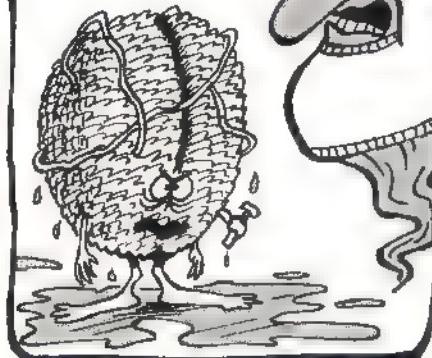


SUDDENLY...OUT OF NOWHERE,
A GIANT TONGUE STICKS OUT
OF A CLOUD, AND...



...WHERE "COMIC BOOK" MCFIEND
STOOD...NOW STANDS...A
BASIL WOLVERTON CHARACTER!

BETTER TRY THAT
AGAIN, KID...I WASN'T
CONCENTRATING...



PLOP



P- PEACHES
L- LEMONS
O- ORANGES
P- PINEAPPLES

SAME CLOUD...
SAME TONGUE...
SAME RASBERRY...

...AND WHERE STOOD
A BASIL WOLVERTON
CHARACTER, NOW STANDS
A VERY WET...



...NOW WITH ALL THE POWERS OF SUPERMAN
...MCFIEND FLYS INTO ACTION...

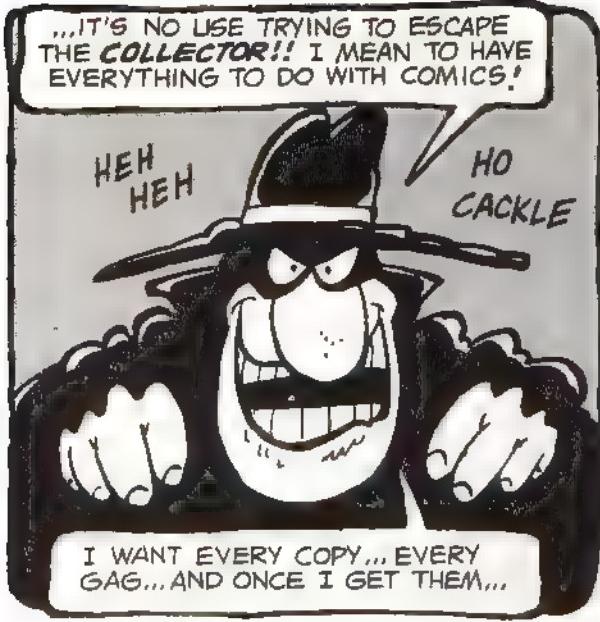


SUDDENLY...



THE COLLECTOR!





OOOEEEEEAAAIEE IIIIEEA A

HOLY BALONEY! THE CRY OF THE GREAT BULL APE...

WHAT SHOULD WE DO, BOSS?

McFIENDZAN!

GET HIM!

THUNDEROUS RASPBERRY SPOOSH!

...EXIT McFIENDZAN...ENTER...

P- POUNCE
L- LUNGE
O- OW
P- POW

PLOP!

BRRCCCTK

PLOP

WHAT THE... IT'S THE GREEN McFIEND!

THE POWER RING SHOULD HOLD THEM!

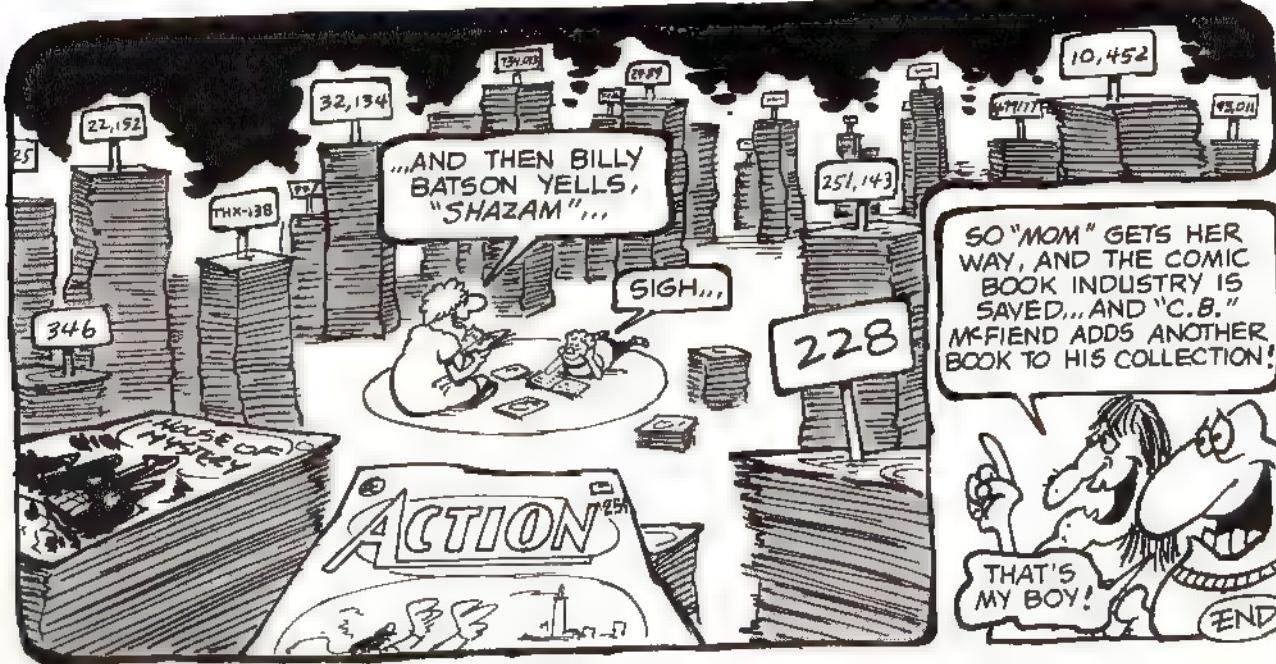
LATER...

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
FOILED BY A COMIC BOOK CHARACTER!

THIS KID IS UNCANNY!

GEE WHIZ... THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE A CARTOON CONVENTION.

YOU GOT THE COLLECTOR!





CHUCKIN' IT

by MICHAEL USLAN

HOW TO HAVE FUN WRITING A COMIC BOOK

It's a great day when a major comics company decides to give your idea a shot in its own magazine. The achievement motivation begins to rise from the toes, parade around in the stomach, then shoot up to the brain. The desire to pour yourself into the project is overwhelming. You have to be devoted to the concept and willing to give it the necessary T.L.C. After all, it is like giving birth to a new baby, isn't it?

Well, **BEOWULF**, with the added catch-phrases "Dragon-Slayer", was to be my baby, and Denny O'Neil agreed to let me have a crack at the writing. The first question that danced around in my head was "How do I write it yet still enjoy reading it?" I remembered a writer from another group telling me how one comic title used to be his favorite, but when he started to write it himself, he could no longer look forward to each issue as it came out. He couldn't really read it and enjoy it. I decided that I would not only have fun writing it, but I would make it fun for me, personally, to read later on.

I call them "The Uslan Games". Bob Rozakis would call them "The Rozakis Games", and Guy Lillian would call them "The Third Games". First, I decided to let the characters have some fun while they battle. Serious, heavy dialogue laced with lots of "Whither thou goest's" would be tough to write steadily. This way I can play with my characters.

Next game—besides the characters listed in the poem, like Beowulf, Wiglaf, and Hondscio, how many of my friends and relatives could I scatter about? First, there had to be a place for my wife, Nancy. Although she can't wield a sword the way she swings a tennis racquet, she would be Nan-Zee. (It's great! Whenever I got mad at her for daring to clean up my study or some such, I just sat down at the typewriter and have somebody knock her into a mud puddle. What a terrible person I am!) Having friends and relatives take part in each story increases their enjoyment and my fun. As you read through the first five issues of **BEOWULF**, you'll find Bob "Kienzo" Klein, Barry "General" Milberg, Jay "Will-Zon" Willson, Don "Donwilde" Wilde, John "Chief Sulli" Sullivan, Sid "Sydril" Wright, Bruce "Bruzzi-Solomon" Solomon, Yushashia Ben Simon (yiddish for Papa Joe Uslan), and En-Lil (Space-talk for Mama Lil Uslan), all names that you'll never forget! And keep watching, **BEOWULF** fans, for Grandma, Aunt Clara, Uncle Phil, and the rest of the family!

Okay, I'm having a good time with the characters. Next comes the plots!

In my undergrad days at dear old Indiana U., I was a history major with a special love for Greek and Roman history. Just for fun, I picked up a minor in Greek Culture and another in English. Now was my chance to make use of some of my favorite aspects of each. An avid mythology freak at one point, I had the chance to restructure and play with The Underworld and its host of happy characters. I even had the chance to take the three-headed dog, Cerebus, move him to the back of the brain, and turn him into Medulius. I could use the sirens Odysseus had met. I could even use Puff the magic Dragon (with the spelling slightly masked as "Pough")! And now I sit trying to figure out a way to work Simon & Garfunkel and The Mouseketeers into a story. Well, 'the quest' was the angle chosen to delay the meeting of Beowulf and Grendel, and it gave me the opportunity to look through old Prince Valiant strips. Remember the squid scene in **20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**? I did, and adapted it for one tale. I dug out my 8th grade poetry folder and quickly used the contents up when

the Joker-in-drag, The Shaper spoke (And then there's Wyrd! The day cannot be far off when we'll see **WEIRD WYRD TALES #1**.) For issue #3, I added a bit from **KING KONG**, one of my favorite flicks and even was able to make use of my passion for **LITTLE NEMO** cartoon strips. #4 gave me the chance to use what I gained from reading **IN SEARCH OF DRACULA** and presented me with the opportunity to toss in my two favorite lines from the Lugosi movie. Had I just been able to toss in a warning of, "Rats! Thousands of rats with red eyes!", Mel Brooks would have been proud. Oh, that was also the issue I mentioned Allan—you know—one of the "Asher men"! That same assistant editor suggested the plot for #5, and although I don't buy Von Dan ken's theories, perhaps **BEOWULF** would. So the barbarian met the gods from beyond, also giving me a chance to use my English History notes concerning Stonehenge and the Druids. And finally I could get my money's worth out of the souvenir book I was conned into buying at Stonehenge when my wife and I were there on our honeymoon. (I almost wrote the story about the two demented ladies who threatened to blow up our bus if the driver didn't stop and let them buy fruit, but that would have detracted too much from the action.)

And what epic is complete without a version of Atlantis? Rather than go with the already established versions of **Lord the Mermaid**, **Aquaman**, or **Prince Na-Mor**, I stuck closer to the movie version I saw as a kid. I'll never forget it—I forgot my glasses and had to sit in the front row. Did you ever sit in the front row of a theater as Atlantis blew up and toppled all over you? Besides, my older brother, Paul, was shooting paper clips at the screen while I was squinting to see what was going on. That, by the way, is why there is a huge shadow of a paper clip covering the sky as Atlantis sinks into the sea.

Choosing a title for next month's issue to place in the blurb at the end is always fun. Especially when you have no idea what your next story will even be about. It's even more fun trying to write a story around a title chosen by a bolt of ten friends. Just for the record, the voting for issue #5 was as follows. "Chariots From The Stars" just squeaking by "Odyssey Of The Gods". Third place went to "Charlots From Beyond", the Miss Congeniality award went to "Gods From Beyond", and coming in last place was "Ma and Pa Kettle Visit Hawaii". (The reason that one lost was because someone thought it was already used in an issue of **CONAN**.)

A final tip on how to make a comic book fun for the writer is in the mystic incantations. Some writers prefer the **Superman** Venus Code #4. I myself prefer the **Zatara** "ecirocl otni nrut snug" Code #10. Issue #1 of **BEOWULF** started timidly with the fierce Unferth saying "Also Sprach Zarathustra" backwards. For those of you not familiar with those words, I suggest you see "**2001**" one more time. My favorite to date occurred during the scene when The Shaper summons Wyrd. As the ghostly form materializes, The Shaper chants backwards, "Harry Houdini—Is that you?" **Bizarro** #1 would've been proud. There are a number of others, but I'll let you find them on your own. After all, comic books should be fun for the reader, too.

It's hard to believe that through this mish-mosh, a somewhat serious comic book results. But if the book stops being fun or if the readers don't think it's enough fun to keep buying it and it gets cancelled—? Well, I guess I'll just have to start throwing my wife into mud puddles! ●

BEGINNINGS... DC

by JACK C. HARRIS

Some months ago national headlines were made when the first issue of **ACTION COMICS**, featuring the premiere appearance of **Superman**, was purchased for over \$1,800.00! This historic event brought the realization that there is something mystical about first issues of comics. It was this purchase, and a number of other factors, that led DC to introduce the dollar-sized **FAMOUS FIRST EDITORS** and the exciting new premiere feature book, **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL**. With these books, DC is able to present an array of firsts from the past and firsts of the future. The presentation of these books has rekindled my personal interest in DC's long and varied past.

I was familiar with **ACTION COMICS** #1 and the first issue of **DETECTIVE COMICS**—the latter being the first regularly scheduled comic to present all the original material and the former introducing the first comic book super hero. These two books set the corner stones for the present day comic industry. But I wondered about the other books. What was featured in books like **ADVENTURE COMICS**, **THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD**, **MORE FUN**, **LEADING COMICS**, and **SHOWCASE**? I was determined to find out!

Deep within a secret vault, somewhere in the Warner Communications Building, are row upon row of black filing cabinets containing a comic collector's most cherished dream. Locked inside are the bound volumes of every DC comic ever published! It was there I sought the answers to my questing mind. But

WHAT EVIL BREW WAS THIS ANCIENT MIXTURE THAT CHILLED MY HEART WITH THE TERRIFYING QUESTION:
WAS I...



what fun is such enlightenment without someone to share it with? Lo and behold, the idea of this series of articles came to mind. I could share my discoveries with the readers of the **AMAZING WORLD OF DC COMICS**! And that was the beginning of "Beginnings . . .".

In this Issue of **AWODCC**, we are showcasing our line of mystery books. You have "met" Joe Orlando and Murray Boltinoff, who edit such mind bending chillers as **HOUSE OF MYSTERY**, **HOUSE OF SECRETS** and **THE UNEXPECTED**. These two editors took over the books from previous editors and reached new heights of mood and suspense, while continuing the legacy that began in the first issue! Let's dust off the old volumes of this trio of titles and take a guided tour of DC's first three mystery books. This is their . . . beginnings . . .

It has only been in recent years that DC has kept records on who has written and drawn the stories that appear in each book. This is why it is almost impossible to determine which writer was behind which great stories of the past. Whitney Ellsworth, DC editorial director for many years, always appeared in the indicia as the editor, even though someone else might have done the actual editing. It is believed that Jack Schiff edited the early issues of **HOUSE OF MYSTERY**, **HOUSE OF SECRETS**, and **TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED**, but Murray Boltinoff and George Kashdan had a lot to do with these titles as well. In

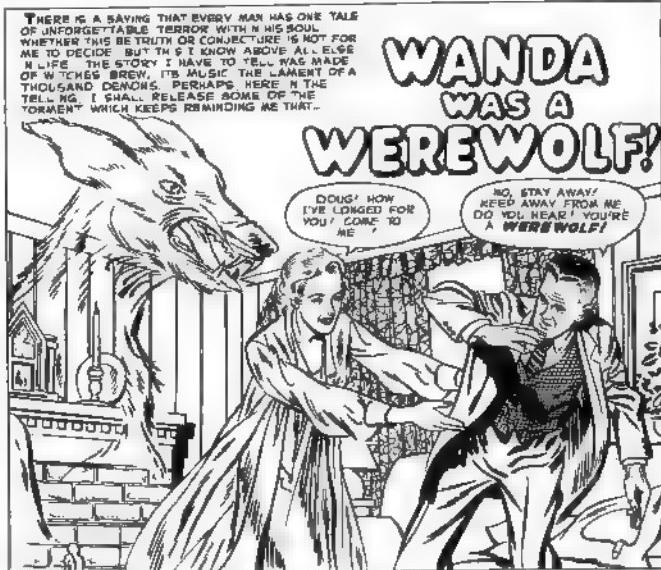


most cases, the identification of an artist's style will be our guide in determining the illustrators.

HOUSE of MYSTERY

In 1951 the comic book industry was searching for new directions. The super-heroes were fast losing their appeal and science-fiction was just in the experimental stages. Other companies had begun series of mystery and supernatural comics with varying degrees of success and taste. So, in the later part of the year, DC decided to enter the field with the first issue of **HOUSE OF MYSTERY**, dated Dec. 1951-Jan. 1952. Unlike other companies' mystery books which took the existence of the supernatural for granted, editor Schiff stressed the "logical explanation" theory for many of the stories.

The lead story, which may have been illustrated by Curt Swan, was told in the first person (as were all the stories in the issue). "I Fell In Love With A Witch" revealed that private eye Carter Blake was being hoaxed into believing that his hauntingly beautiful girl



friend was a witch. Through clever, clear-headed sleuthing Blake discovered that the hoax had been perpetrated by a murderous businessman. In contrast, "Man or Monster," drawn by Bob Brown, was a Jekyll-Hyde story, complete with the evil potion. "The Curse of Seabury Manor" gave both sides of the story when daredevil Dan Perry dared to spend the night in a cursed house. He died and the logical explanation was "carbon monoxide poisoning." But the reader was left with the question of why Perry's face held an expression of stark terror! The cover artist, whose name is lost to history, also illustrated "Wanda Was A Werewolf," which was another logically explained hoax. A text feature on the exposing of fake spiritualists, written by Dave Kahn and a feature page of the true story of "The Ghost of Paris" rounded out this first issue.

In the years to come, science-fiction, and even super-hero features such as the **Martian Manhunter** and **Dial H for Hero**, would appear in the pages of **HOUSE OF MYSTERY**. It wasn't until the late 60's that the book would return to the eerie and supernatural that were featured in the beginning.



TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

Late 1955 was the beginning for **TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED**, the original title of **THE UNEXPECTED**. Dated Feb.-March, 1956, it featured stories of science fiction with twist endings rather than the terror-filled tales that Murray Boltinoff presents today. But unlike the Julie Schwartz s-f comics that featured smatterings of science fact, the first issue of **TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED** leaned much further toward the fiction.

The Bill Ely cover on this first issue depicted a comic artist drawing a winged man on his bristol board as an identical dragon-man was climbing in the studio window.

Rip Kirby artist John Prentice illored the tale told by a New York doctor who related his weird experiences in "The Out-Of-The-World Club." A jazz fan, the doctor was intrigued by the hidden musicians who played in a newly opened night club. The club it turned out, was run by a band of marauding aliens who were using it as a front to loot the earth of its natural resources. Discovering this, the doctor was taken prisoner, but he was able to escape and defeat the aliens by subjecting their sensitive ears to high volume jazz. An unknown artist drew the whimsical tale of Cyrus Perkins and his teleportational "Dream Lamp." And the intriguing "Secret of Cell Sixteen," illored by Howard Purcell, followed an 18th Century Frenchman, Duval, who was imprisoned in a cell from



THE CARTOON THAT CAME TO LIFE



which there was only one escape! At least, that was what he was told by his captor, who promised Duval's release if he could find the passage. After digging numerous tunnels and climbing many walls he gave up, only to discover that the cell door had never been locked!

Jack Miller's text page on exposing ghosts and an array of Henry Boltinoff cartoons led up to the Bill Ely-illustrated cover story. "The Cartoon that Came To Life" told of cartoonist Dan Doyal who came up with an exciting science-fiction comic strip called "Dragon-Man From Mars". Unknown to Doyal, the idea had been planted in his mind by invading Dragon-Men who really were from Mars. They reasoned, correctly, that Doyal's benevolent character would bring compassion for them and that Earth would not suspect their true motives. Earth was to lose to the Dragon-Men from Mars, but comic readers gained a different comic that has presented some of the finest science-fiction and suspense stories in comicdom!

House of **SECRETS**

Now that Jack Schiff and the others had ex-



perimented with suspense stories and science-fiction, they decided to feature both in the premiere issue of **HOUSE OF SECRETS**, Nov.-Dec., 1956.

Ruben Moreira's cover for **HOS #1** depicted a giant red hand breaking off the head of Egypt's Sphinx. Bill Ely drew "The Phantom Duel", in which the third party of an "eternal triangle" was a ghost. The spirit of the dead rival returned to destroy the man who had killed him in a duel and stolen his girl. Or was it all an hallucination? The story left the answer up to the reader.

"The Unlucky Beauties", which may have been drawn by Benard Bailey, learned the secret of the Venus De Milo: Eternal beauty, but the loss of power in their right arms. It was this curse that prevented the vain women from signing a marriage license with a new-found love, fulfilling a new acting career or carving great works of sculptured art.

The legend of the "Sorcerer's Handcuffs", drawn by



MAD artist Mort Drucker, was followed through the hands of their many owners. Once placed on, the cuffs could not be removed until good triumphed over evil. When they fell into the hands of a hobo, he cuffed himself to a millionaire, hoping to be linked to riches all his life. Unfortunately for both men, the "millionaire" was also a hobo—one who had won the "Millionaire-For-A-Day" TV Show.

A text page credited to Gus Kelly revealed the story of a phony seer, Mother Shipton. The cover story featuring the artwork of Jim Mooney, was "The Hand of Doom!" Revealed as that of a giant alien child at play, a twist-ending s-f tale contrasted the supernatural themes of the rest of the book.

In later years, **Mark Merlin** and **Eclipse** were among the features in the pages of **HOUSE OF SECRETS**. For awhile the book was even cancelled! Nowadays Joe Orlando has **Abel** lead readers through tales of horror and chills. •





SWAMP THING

25c
NO. 15
APR
30686



THE AMAZING WORLD OF LETTERS

Two issues ago, we asked for a different kind of letter for these pages—the kind that would evoke reader debate and discussion on a variety of topics. The response thus far has been far from overwhelming, but we do have a few readers who came forth to take a stand.

Dear Woodchucks,

After Marvel's various attempts at **AWODCC**-type projects, I was quite happy to see my favorite comics company give it a try. **AMAZING WORLD** is beautiful and points out graphically something I've said for years—DC is the most professional comics publisher. Take a look at **FOOM**. Though it compares favorably with various fan-produced books, it pales next to **AWODCC**, just as Marvel's comics do next to DC's. Admittedly, Marvel has some incredible talent, but something is missing. For some reason, all their efforts look haphazard, shoddy, anything but professional. And while DC may fall into a juvenile rut frequently, the books always look super in overall package.

Your claim about a "Line of Super-Stars" couldn't be more accurate. Take DC's and Marvel's characters and see how many of them would be recognized by someone other than a comics reader. DC has a wealth of stars who bridge the gap into American society—**Superman**, **Batman** (and **Robin**), **Captain Marvel**, **Wonder Woman**, **Tarzan**, **The Shadow**! Marvel? Only **Spider-Man** and, of course, **Conan**, to his literary audience. I rest my case. DC is number one!

ROB SANSING
Box 1015
Auburn, AL 36830

Dear Mr. Rozakis:

Marvel can no longer compete with National and I'll give you the reasons why:

1) National's stories have plots and are not all action—as Cary Bates said in **AWODCC #2**. Also, the stories don't always have some super-villain trying to take over the world. The stories have more feeling in them.

2) National's art is ten times better. Take, for instance, Dick Giordano—Marvel has maybe two artists almost as good.

3) National has comics with broader views. You have a barbarian type, a magazine starring a villain, and stories about the stone age, the future and all in between. Plus the regular superheroes. Far out!

Marvel may have been #1 in the '60's, but the '70's are a new era in comics. DC is number 1!

WAYNE H. CANADA
1132 Tanglewood Lane
Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076

(Obviously, the above letters will open quite a can of beans if there are some Marvel fans out there! One thing to keep in mind, however, is that DC and Marvel have different ideas as to how a comic book should be done—and each has readers who prefer one to the other! Comments?—BR)

Dear Bob and fellow Woodchucks,

Your editorial request in the latest issue of **AMAZING WORLD** was serendipity to me. I had just begun to formulate a letter wanted to write about the first issue of **THE JOKER**, but, as I thought about it, I really wanted to make a statement

about comics in general. Your decision to avoid the usual pap of "It was good . . ." letters left a void I hope misses like mine can fill.

Philosophically, **THE JOKER** cannot succeed as a magazine. The nature of comic books—especially superhero ones—demands goodness. From **Superman**, the first superhero, right through the do-gooders whose tales are even now being devised, the premise of the story is basic: A person is born with, endowed with or created with special abilities which make him superior to his fellow man. In the case of **The Flash**, an accident gave him super-speed. **Superman** got his as a result of coming to Earth. And **Green Lantern** was sought out to be given the super-weapon, his power ring. At any rate, any comic reader worth his salt demands that this person use these special powers to benefit the rest of the world, which has not been similarly blessed.

At the 1974 Comicon, when one of the costume parade contestants removed his purple hood to reveal the face of Richard Nixon, he got fifteen minutes of good-natured boos. This is because our former president was antithetical to the morality of comics. Here was a man given powers and knowledge superior to those of other men, given him specifically for use to benefit all other Americans. Mr. Nixon did not and thus, he and other similarly-powered men who used their powers for the wrong purposes are the real-life equivalent of comic book supervillains.

A look at **Lex Luthor**—**Superman's** foe with super-intelligence—or **Sinestro**—the renegade **Green Lantern**—reveals the epitome of the Watergate epic.

These are men specially endowed, using their powers for selfish motives, making them more evil than villains with no powers.

Though there are probably exceptions, comic book fans are extremely honest. In fact, they have to be! Can you picture a dedicated fan stealing the latest issue of his favorite mag? The concept of dishonesty is opposite to the underlying morality of the entire superhero genre. Could we root for **Batman** against **The Joker** if, when a policeman is pursuing us for stealing the comic, the distinction between **Batman** and policeman is impossible to make?

In the first issue of **THE JOKER**, the arch-villain performs good acts. He attempts to stop **Two-Face** from stealing. Even though he does it for selfish, spiteful reasons, we can root for him. But can **The Joker** be put in similar situations, performing good deeds for bad reasons without becoming repetitive and quickly losing our interest? I doubt it!

FRED SCHNEIDER
5 University Place—Room 634
New York, N.Y. 10003

(There are a number of directions for discussion of your letter, Fred. We'll be interested to see what your fellow readers choose to comment upon!—BR)

Dear Woodchucks,

This letter is about comicdom's most vilified enemy, Dr. Frederic Wertham. In an issue of **AMAZING WORLD** you gave a bad review to one of his books. As a matter of fact, comicdom has always been quick to condemn Wertham. Why? Possibly it is because Wertham attacks the more saleable aspects of comic sensationalism—sex, violence, and unusually simplistic reasoning and actions by comics characters.

For example, you have to admit that with the notable exception of **Mary Marvel** (and maybe **Sue Richards**), almost every comics heroine is well-endowed. Perhaps artists like to draw the female body, but the full-developed woman has always been a part of comics.

Similarly, violence has no limitations, especially in superhero books. Look at Kirby's creations, **Sgt. Rock** or the always-violent

Batman. Since comics are and must be an action medium, such violence cannot help but play a part.

As for the mindless thought patterns of the heroes and villains, space limitations prevent development of meaningful characterization.

If these aspects of comics are highly distasteful to certain groups, why do they still exist in comics today? Obviously, because they sell, and sell well.

What I'm asking you is to not mindlessly condemn critics like Wertham, but, instead, react to and analyze their criticisms. If it is profitable to take comics in other directions, you should do so. If it proves impossible, it is not really a judgement on you, the publishers, but on the buying public.

ANTONE PERRY
10166 East Grayson Road
Denair, Cal. 95316

(We did not mindlessly condemn Dr. Wertham, Antone. I read **THE WORLD OF FANZINES** and agree with Carl Gafford's review in **AWODCC #2**. And while we're on the subject of condemnation, wasn't it Dr. Wertham who condemned the entire comic book industry for things being done by the less-scrupulous publishers of that time? Comments?—BR)

SUGGESTION DEPARTMENT: Being as this is a clearing house for a variety of ideas concerning **AWODCC** and **DC** in general, we are printing excerpts from letters: . . . How about reviving some of your old creations for a try in **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL**? The **Justice Society**, The **Seven Soldiers of Victory**, **Hour-Man**, **Dr. Fate**, **The Black Condor**, and plenty of others deserve a chance!—ROY C. GALES, 1 Norfeld Blvd., Elmont, N.Y. 10003.

. . . How about interviews with Curt Swan, Bob Haney, Jim Aparo, Dick Giordano, Dick Dillin? Also, I second the motion for a readers' poll on comics-related subjects.—CHARLES D. RYAN, 1434 E. California Ave., Glendale, Cal. 91206.

(Curt Swan will be profiled next issue!—BR)

. . . You have the opportunity to really survey readers' desires. Twenty years ago you used **SHOWCASE** for the same purpose. Now you'll have a cheaper, more accurate method.—CHARLES C. EGBERT, 12 Don Lane, Hauppauge, N.Y. 11787.

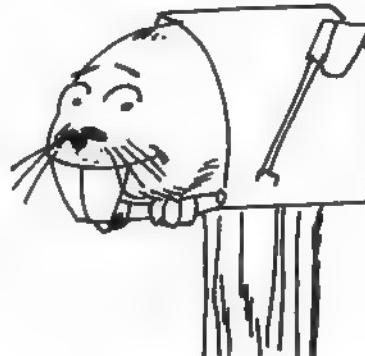
. . . How about a section in a future issue devoted to crackpot mail received at DC?—BOB BURROS, 37-54 64th St., Woodside, N.Y. 11377

. . . A fanzine review column might be a good idea. **AMAZING WORLD** is the only exposure many of your readers have to comics fandom. Let them know what's going on in the world.—HARRY BROERTJES, 728 Clark St., Apt. 302, Evanston, Ill. 60201

(Let's leave this open—if we get copies to review, we'll see about devoting some space to reviewing them!—BR)

. . . 1) Cut the ten page comic story to make room for more articles. 2) Give us a history of DC and histories of the magazines you've produced. 3) Give us an index of story titles for the magazines.—LES RILEY, PO Box 487, Brookline, No. 65619

(Gentlemen, we thank you all for your comments and suggestions. Keep reading and see what we do with them!—Bob Rozakis) •



No Joe Orlando issue could be complete without an Orlando art job, so here's one of the master's favorite stories, an E.C. classic entitled ...

JUDGMENT DAY!

THE MAN ROARED DOWN FROM THE NIGHT SKY. HE'D COME FROM THE INFINITE VOID OF SPACE...ACROSS THE ENDLESS COSMIC VACUUM. HE'D COME FROM THE PLANET EARTH. HE'D COME IN A SHIP OF GLEAMING ALLOYS... BELCHING BLUE FLAMES AND YELLOW CLOUDS OF ATOMIC DUST. AND HE'D COME ALONE. HE STEPPED TO THE PORT AMID THE CHEERS OF THE ROBOT POPULATION.

WELCOME! WELCOME, EARTHMAN,
TO CYBRINIA... TO THE PLANET
OF MECHANICAL LIFE!



THE MAN STEPPED FROM HIS GLEAMING SHIP. HE STEPPED INTO THE ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT THAT FLOODED THE LANDING SITE. HE EXTENDED HIS HAND...

I AM TARLTON... FROM WE ARE READY! WE 'EARTH COLONIZATION.' HAVE LABORED LONG I AM HERE TO INSPECT. AND HARD TO PER-
IF I FIND THAT YOU FECT OUR SOCIETY.
ARE READY...



SCRIPT BY WILLIAM M. GAINES
AND AL FELDSTEIN

COPYRIGHT © 1975 by WILLIAM M. GAINES

TARLTON MOVED FORWARD THROUGH THE CROWD OF ORANGE ROBOTS THAT PRESSED AROUND HIM. HE STOPPED AND QUESTIONED ONE...



TARLTON NODDED. THE ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT DANCED ON HIS SPACE HELMET...

QUITE RIGHT. THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO, WE PLACED A SMALL HANDFUL OF YOU UPON THIS PLANET. THIS SMALL HANDFUL WAS GIVEN THE KNOW-HOW TO BUILD MORE OF YOU...



WE LEFT YOU TO YOURSELVES. WE HOPED THAT IN TIME YOU WOULD DEVELOP A SOCIETY WORTHY OF INCLUSION IN EARTH'S GREAT GALACTIC REPUBLIC. AT THAT TIME ALL OF OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES, OUR GLORY, WOULD BECOME YOURS...



COME, TARLTON. LET US SHOW YOU WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED! LET US SHOW YOU THAT WE ARE READY...

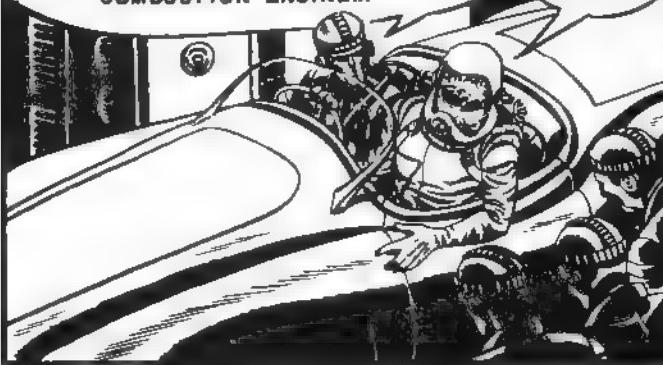
LEAD THE WAY...



THE SPACE-SUIT CLAD EARTH-MAN FOLLOWED THE ORANGE ROBOT PAST THE CROWD OF METAL ONLOOKERS TO A SLEEK-LOOKING LOW VEHICLE...

THIS IS KNOWN AS A MOBILE-CAR. IT WAS DEVELOPED QUITE SOME TIME AGO BY N-R-E-PHORD. IT OPERATES BY MEANS OF AN INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE...

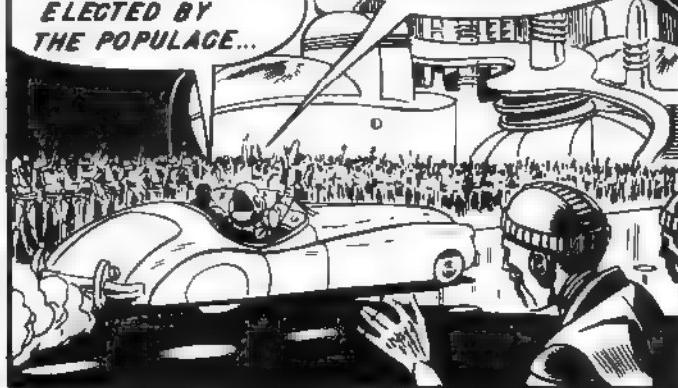
YES. GOOD! GOOD! TWENTIETH CENTURY LEVEL...



THE SPEEDY MOBILE-CAR SWEEPED THE EARTHMAN THROUGH A SHINING CITY, ALONG STREETS JAMMED WITH CHEERING ORANGE ROBOTS...

THIS IS OUR CAPITOL CITY! THAT BUILDING THERE IS OUR HOUSE OF DELEGATES... ELECTED BY THE POPULACE...

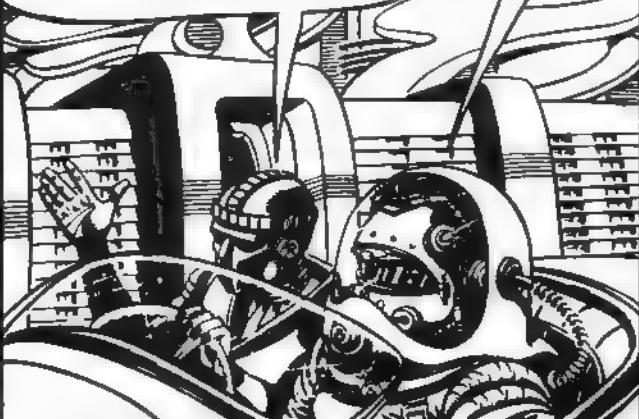
HMM. INTERESTING. DEMOCRATIC RULE. VERY GOOD. AND THAT BUILDING...



THE EARTHMAN POINTED TO A LONG LOW STRUCTURE...

THAT BUILDING IS OUR CONSTRUCTION LINE AND ASSEMBLY PLANT WHERE OUR POPULATION IS MADE...

STOP HERE. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT...



THE MOBILE-CAR PULLED UP BEFORE THE PLANT, AND THE EARTH-MAN GOT OUT. HE FOLLOWED HIS ORANGE ROBOT-GUIDE INTO THE BUILDING...

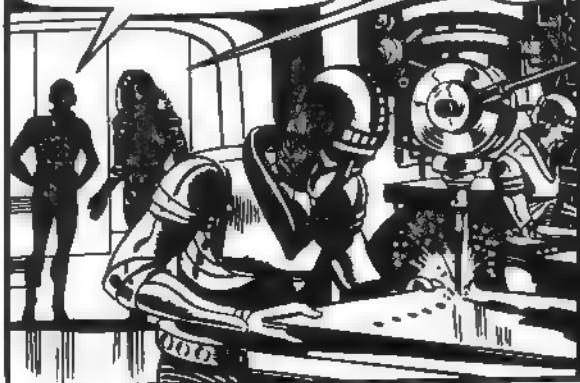
THIS IS THE PARTS DEPARTMENT, WHERE OUR UNITS ARE CONSTRUCTED...

I SEE ONLY ORANGE WORKERS! WHAT ABOUT THE BLUE ROBOTS...



TARLTON'S GUIDE TURNED TO HIM SHAKING HIS HEAD...

OH! WE...WE MAKE ONLY ORANGE I SEE. ROBOTS HERE. THE BLUE ROBOTS, SHALL WELL... I'LL TAKE YOU TO THEIR WE GO ON... PLANT LATER...



THEY MOVED FROM THE PARTS SECTION TO THE FINAL ASSEMBLY LINE...

HERE, THE SKELETONS ARE CONSTRUCTED. THE ORIGINAL ALLOY IS STILL USED.

NATURALLY!



THEY MOVED ALONG THE ASSEMBLY LINE...

HERE, THE INTERNAL UNITS... MOTORS, MAGNETS, RELAYS, POWER SUPPLIES, AND SO FORTH... ARE INSTALLED...

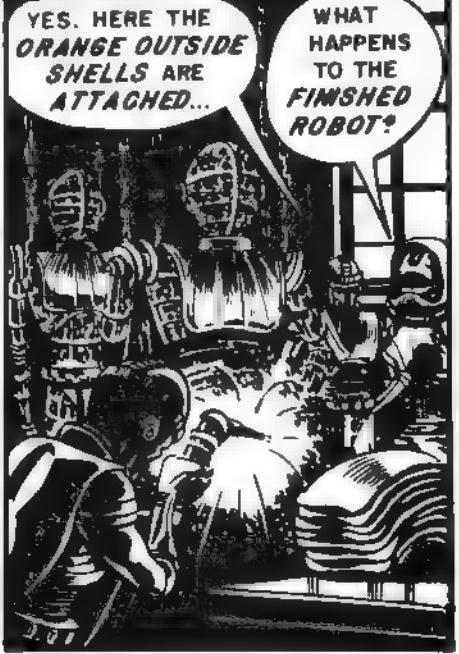
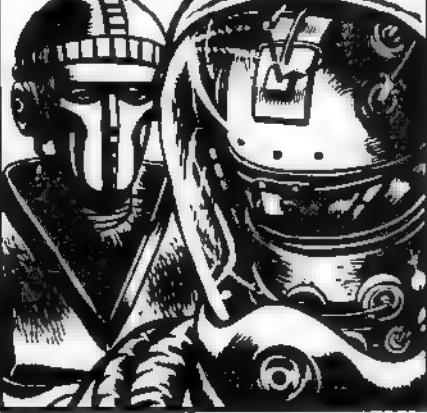
NO IMPROVEMENTS ON THE ORIGINAL DESIGN, I SEE ...

NO! WE DARED NOT ATTEMPT IT. THESE MODELS WILL BE EXACTLY LIKE THE ORIGINALS...

AND THIS IS THE SHEATHING STAGE ...

YES. HERE THE ORANGE OUTSIDE SHELLS ARE ATTACHED...

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FINISHED ROBOT?



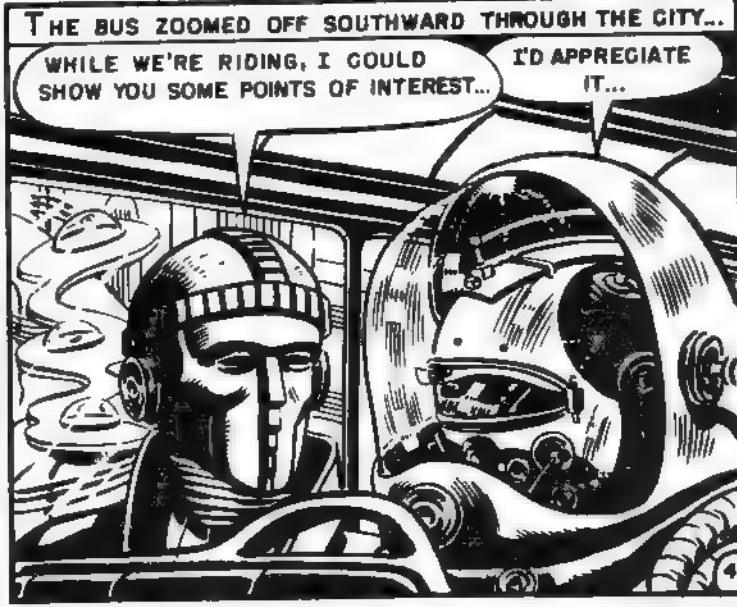
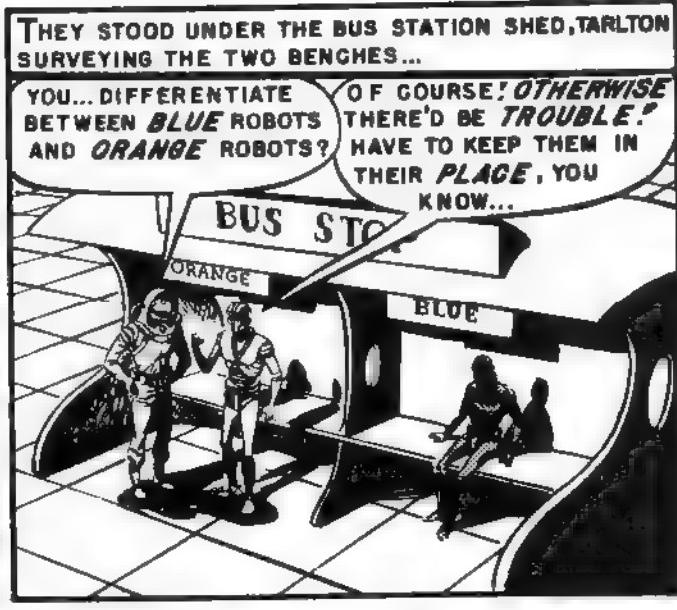
HE IS TESTED, THEN PLACED IN THE 'EDUCATOR', WHERE HIS MECHANICAL BRAIN IS CHARGED WITH ALL KNOWLEDGE AVAILABLE TO OUR SOCIETY...

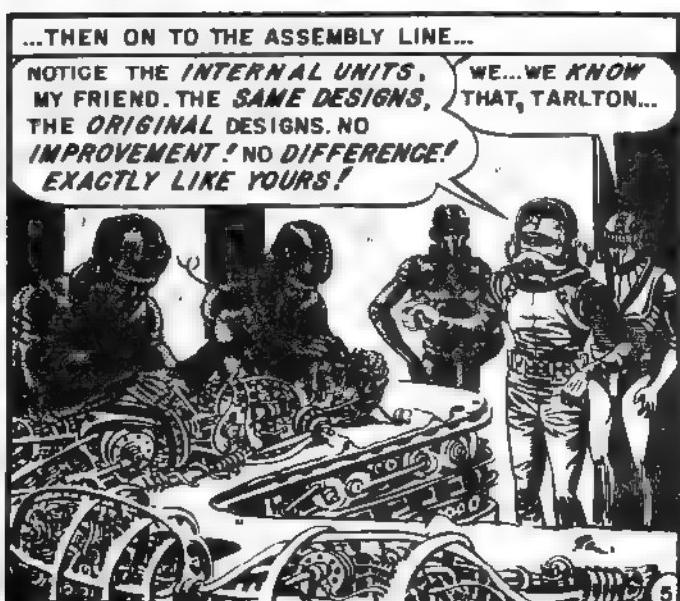
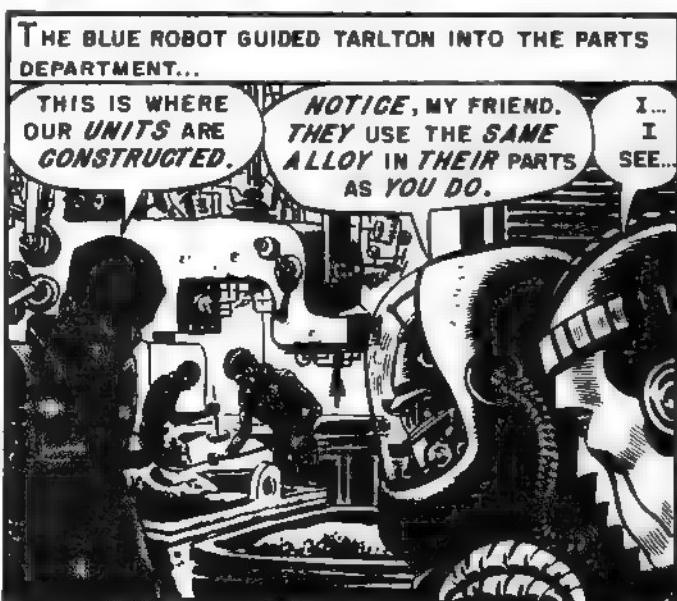
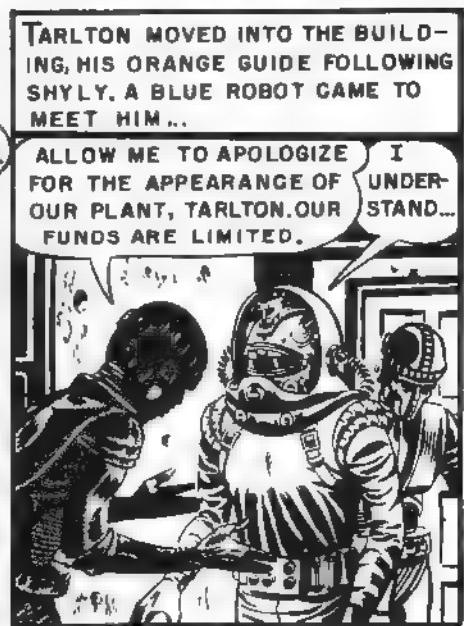
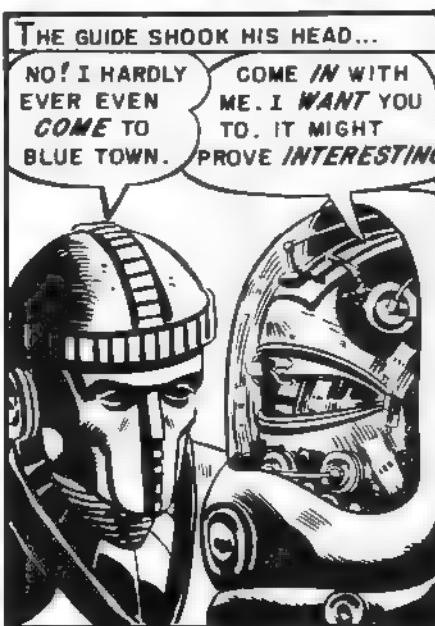
AND THEN...

HE BECOMES A MEMBER OF THAT SOCIETY. FIRST, HE MUST WORK ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE FOR A SHORT PERIOD...

GOOD. RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD PROPAGATION. GOOD...







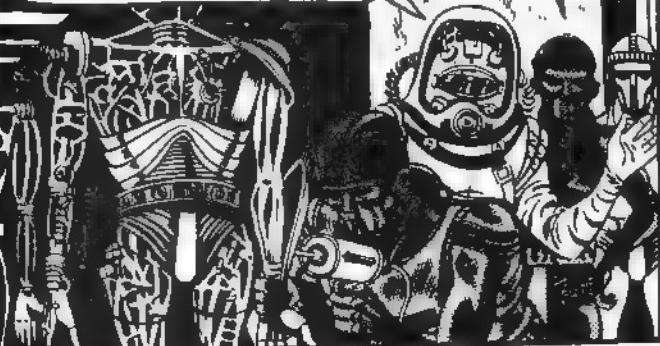
AND FINALLY TO THE SHEATHING STAGE...

IT IS ONLY HERE, MY FRIEND, WITH THE BLUE SHEATHINGS, THAT A DIFFERENCE CAN BE DETECTED. BUT THE SHEATHINGS ARE ONLY OUTSIDE COVERINGS. THE INSIDE STRUCTURES ARE NO DIFFERENT THAN YOURS...

THE SHEATHINGS MAKE THAT DIFFERENCE TO THE ORANGE ROBOTS, TARLTON!

IT LIMITS US TO MENIAL JOBS... SENDS US TO THE REAR OF MOBILE-BUSES... PLACES US IN DIFFERENT RECHARGING STATIONS... FORCES US TO LIVE IN A SPECIAL SECTION OF THE CITY...

AND WHEN A BLUE ROBOT IS COMPLETED. THEN WHAT...?



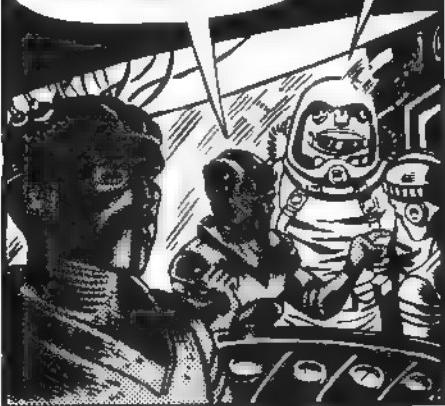
HE IS TESTED, THEN PLACED TELL IN THE 'EDUCATOR', TARLTON. ME, ONLY THIS EDUCATOR IS A 'BLUE' EDUCATOR! IT HASN'T THE ADVANTAGES OF THE 'ORANGE' EDUCATOR...

...WOULD YOU DENY THAT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOU AND THE BLUE ROBOTS ARE TAUGHT... IN YOUR 'EDUCATOR'?

I... I COULDN'T DENY THAT, TARLTON.

THE 'EDUCATOR' IS THE PARENTS AND THE RELATIVES AND THOSE WORDS, THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE SCHOOL ALL ROLLED INTO ONE, EH?

I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND



NO! I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T! YOU SAID BEFORE THAT THIS WAS A FREE ENTERPRISE SOCIETY. THAT AFTER AN ORANGE ROBOT SERVES ITS TIME ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE, THAT IT IS FREE TO FOLLOW ITS OWN CHOICE OF ENDEAVOR...

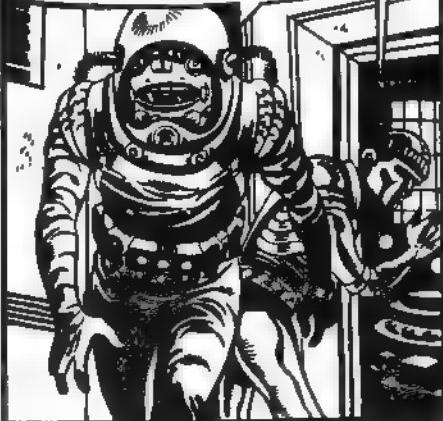
I... I SAID THAT, YES.

THAT OF COURSE, DOES NOT INCLUDE THE BLUE ROBOTS, EH? THEIR CHOICES OF ENDEAVOR ARE LIMITED...

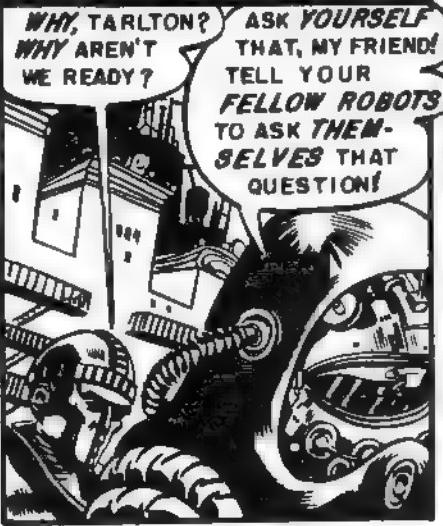
YOU ARE LECTURING ME AS THOUGH ALL THIS WERE MY FAULT, TARLTON! THIS EXISTED LONG BEFORE I WAS MADE! WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT? I'M ONLY ONE ROBOT!



I AM SORRY MY FRIEND! NO. WAIT, YES. I KNOW YOU ARE TARLTON. ONLY ONE ROBOT. THAT IS WHY I AM AFRAID THAT CYBRINIA IS NOT YET READY TO JOIN THE GREAT GALACTIC REPUBLIC...



TARLTON MOVED OUT OF THE BLUE ASSEMBLY PLANT THROUGH BLUE TOWN. THE ORANGE ROBOT HURRIED AFTER HIM...



TARLTON MOVED FAST. THE ROBOT CLANKED AFTER HIM...

IS...IS THERE ANY HOPE, TARLTON? OF COURSE THERE IS! FOR US?



TARLTON STOPPED BELOW HIS GLEAMING ROCKET...

OF COURSE THERE'S HOPE FOR YOU, MY FRIEND. FOR A WHILE, ON EARTH, IT LOOKED LIKE THERE WAS NO HOPE! BUT WHEN MANKIND ON EARTH LEARNED TO LIVE TOGETHER, REAL PROGRESS FIRST BEGAN. THE UNIVERSE WAS SUDDENLY OURS.

...AND WHEN WE LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER...

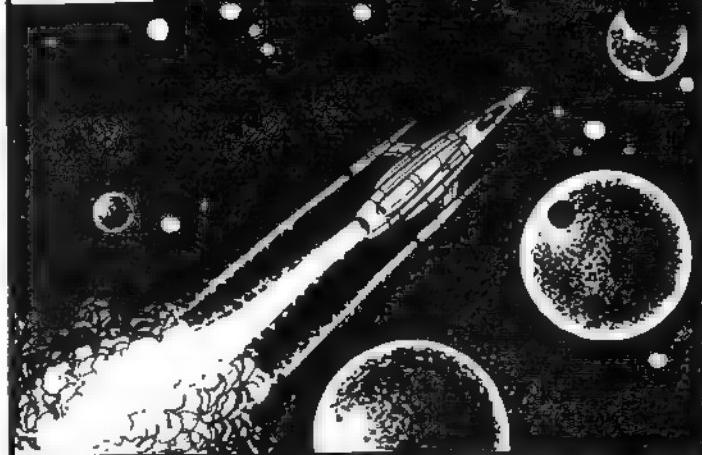


THE UNIVERSE WILL BE YOURS TOO. GOOD-BYE, MY FRIEND!

GOOD-BYE, TARLTON.



THE SHIP ROARED UP INTO THE NIGHT SKY. IT ROARED INTO THE INFINITE VOID OF SPACE...INTO THE ENDLESS COSMIC VACUUM! IT ROARED TOWARD GLORIOUS EARTH...



AND INSIDE THE SHIP, THE MAN REMOVED HIS SPACE HELMET AND SHOOK HIS HEAD, AND THE INSTRUMENT LIGHTS MADE THE BEADS OF PERSPIRATION ON HIS DARK SKIN TWINKLE LIKE DISTANT STARS...



DIRECT CURRENTS

Things have been happening so fast here at DC that if we had done Direct Currents three days earlier, we would have left out half a dozen news items—including a couple of the most important ones.

The first scoop is an editorial arrival, and an editorial departure. Gerry Conway, who came over to DC to do a few fill-in scripts, has decided to join our editorial ranks. For those of you devoted fans who read only our mags, he may be an unknown quantity, but those of you who have sneaked a look at our competitor's top magazines are sure to bid a warm welcome to Gerry Conway!

Gerry started his career at DC as a boy wonder, when he was still in high school. He sold some mystery stories to Murray Boltinoff and then-editor Dick Giordano, and worked on his first series—**The Phantom Stranger**—for Joe Orlando. Then his wanderlust took hold and he moved on to **Marvel Comics**, where his credits included their top series: **Spider-Man**, **Thor**, and **The Fantastic Four**. During the time that he was working there some of his jobs that had been in inventory here at DC were printed under the pseudonym Francis X. Bushmaster.

Now that same wanderlust has brought him back to DC. Originally, as we reported last issue, Gerry was only planning to do a little free-lance writing for us—a two-part **Justice League of America** story, which guest-stars Two-Face; a **Swamp Thing** fill-in script; and so forth—but by the time he had finished the **Swamp Thing** story, he

ended up as a DC editor, also writing exclusively for us.

Well, not quite exclusively, perhaps. Gerry's got a second writing life in the paperback science-fiction field, and if you check out your local book store you might be able to find his second novel, "Mindship" (DAW Books), and we're sure that you'll be seeing more of his work in that format in the future.

As everyone knows, the thing that makes a man an editor is his magazines, but we can't tell you about most of Gerry's—here. Since seven of his titles are brand new mags, they're discussed in a separate Sneak Preview section. But his eighth title we can reveal, and it'll clue you into our editorial departure—because Gerry is taking over **KAMANDI**.

That's right, Jack Kirby has decided to move on to other pastures, and is packing his bags and his mags. We're naturally sorry to see him go, but since this is Jack's third departure from DC in four decades, we figure we're likely to see him back again someday. Good luck wherever you wander, Jack!

Jack left a legacy of three magazines: **KAMANDI**, as we mentioned, is going to spanning new editor Gerry Conway, who will also be writing the mag. Gerry will be writing three issues that Jack's going to draw, and then an as-yet-unchosen artist will take over the pencilling, with Mike Royer handling the inks.

OUR FIGHTING FORCES featuring **The Losers** is going to veteran editor Murray Boltinoff, who has not yet settled on his creative team for this assignment.

Which leaves **OMAC**, which will be dropped after #8, since we have other new ideas that we're more interested in developing.

There are a bunch of other changes, too—we're revamping our line of 50¢ Giants. All the magazines that had only one or two 50¢ issues a year will now be 25¢ all the time (including the **HOUSE OF SECRETS** Giant in last month's listings, which is now a 25¢ issue). And instead, we're launching three more

50¢ titles and raising the frequency of **DC SPECIAL** to bi-monthly.

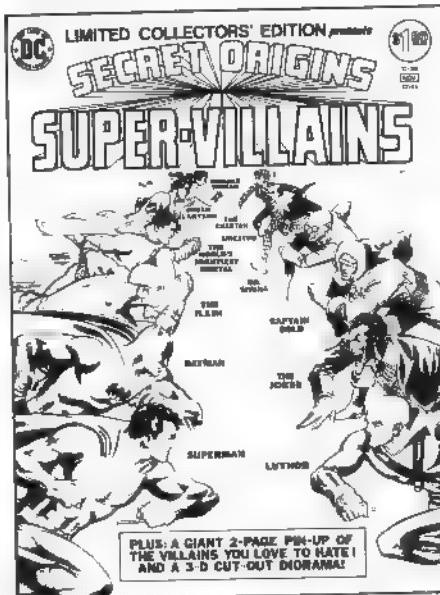
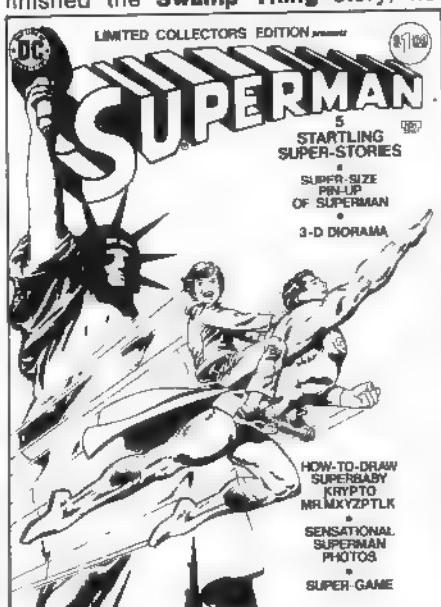
One of the 50¢ mags is **TARZAN FAMILY**, which will include the short-lived **KORAK** mag. The last **KORAK** issue is #59, and **TARZAN FAMILY** begins two months later with #60.

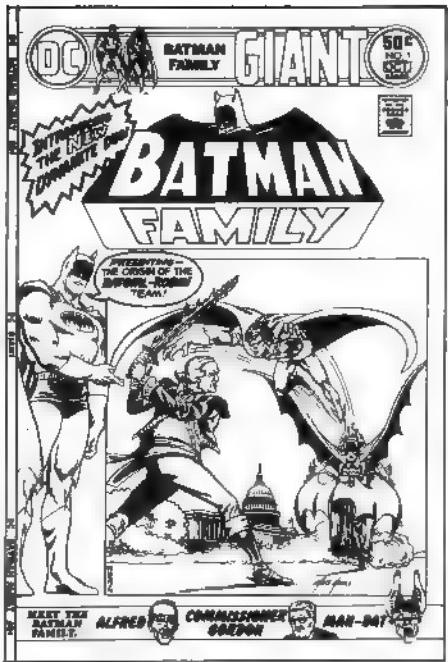
Surprisingly, **SUPERMAN FAMILY** came through all this unchanged.

Going back to the case of Conway, we feel bound to comment that although an editorial workload like Gerry's would keep most writers quite busy and happy, it isn't enough for as fast a scribe as Gerry. So, he's picking up the scripting chores on **KONG THE UNTAMED** beginning with a co-authorship credit on #3. He's also doing fill-in issues of many series, including **The Unknown Soldier**, and **Lois Lane**.

Our **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL** series is going to great guns, and we have a whole bunch of additional one-shots to announce:

In this issue's listings look for **THE DINGBATS**, a new Kirby kid gang series, and **THE CREEPER**, revived under the talented hands of Michael Fleisher, Steve Ditko and Mike Royer. Next is **THE WARLORD**, the top secret series from Mike Grell that we accidentally featured in a house ad before telling you about it! Sorry, readers, but here's the scoop—Mike's writing, penciling, inking and even lettering this series about a man's incredible adventures at the Earth's Core. It'll premiere in **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL** #8, and two months after that it will take off in its





own mag. (Confidential to Legion fans: Mike's still going to be handling the super-teens, so don't get nervous!) And then there are some series that are just beginning to be worked on: **GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW** is probably headed for a revival under editor/writer Denny O'Neil.

DOCTOR FATE is magic-ing his way along, under the guidance of editor Gerry Conway, writer Marty Pasko and artist Walt Simonson. And the pliable powerhouse is back, too, as Steve Skeates and Ramona Fradon join forces on a **PLASTIC MAN** story for Gerry Conway. And that's just the tip of the iceberg!

* * * *

As surely as the sun rises, there're always artist and writer switches:

- Jack Kirby did **KUNG FU FIGHTER** #3, but a fourth new artist will take over the series beginning with #4!

- John Calnan, the **GHOSTS**-ly artist, is making his **UNEXPECTED** debut as an inker by doing the latest **WORLD'S FINEST COMICS** saga over Dick Dillin's pencils. After seeing the results, we can only wonder where editor Murray Boltinoff has been hiding John all these years!

- Ernie Chua's not satisfied with working on **BATMAN** and **DETECTIVE COMICS**, he's also doing an issue of **THE JOKER**, and is going to ink his own pencils on a story for **DETECTIVE**.
- But if you take one assignment, you have to give up another, so Pat Boyette will be inking **CLAW THE UNCONQUERED** #3

- Jose Luis Garcia Lopez is becoming a star artist—he's moving from one series to another so quickly that we can't even follow him. Besides doing six issues of **Jonah Hex** a year, and inking many **Batman** jobs, he's inked a Curt Swan **Superman** job, pencilled a **Private Life Of Clark Kent**, pencil-inked a lovely **Hawkman** story for

SNEAK PREVIEW

New talent around the offices means new magazines, and as your eye skims over the preview pics on the next couple of pages we have no doubts that you'll be as excited about these new mags as we are.

* * * *

THE POWER OF HERCULES, which chronicles the adventures of the man-god in World War Four. The son of Zeus has been chained to an Aegean isle for centuries, and now he's unbound to battle his immortal enemy,



Ares, who is masterminding an Earth-wide Armageddon. Joining Hercules in this struggle is a blind lad whose parents died in the war, and his dog. Editor Joe Orlando's putting together the talents of Gerry Conway, Garcia Lopez and Wally Wood on this masterwork. First issue on sale in October.

* * * *

Coming up next is a mag that our publisher has wanted to do for a long time now, because he thinks it's a natural—and we agree. Kirk Langstrom began his career trying to emulate the famous **Batman**, but he went one step further—his Bat-gland serum gave him the appearance and powers of a true creature of the night, and the curse of becoming **MAN-BAT**! Editor Gerry Conway wrote the first issue to kick this series off, but then it'll be carried by **WONDER WOMAN**—scripter Marty Pasko. The awesome illustration on the right is by the duo that'll be drawing the mag, Steve Ditko and Allen Milgrom. #1 on sale in September.

* * * *

After that, we're moving on to a revival—as we reintroduce the famous **BLACKHAWK** team, after a seven year hiatus. They'll be set in the seventies, but with some surprising changes in their modus operandi—in fact, the **Blackhawks** are mercenaries now! This, and other surprises, await you

when you read #244, in September. Editor Gerry Conway's using a surprising but fitting team on this mag—writer Steve Skeates and artist George Evans!

* * * *

And speaking of revivals, our next mag is the most demanded revival in the history of comics fandom. Readers, get ready for the all-new **ALL-STAR COMICS**—starring the **SUPER-SQUAD**! It wouldn't make sense to have the **Justice Society** competing

POWER GIRL



DETECTIVE, and is taking on a new mag for Joe Orlando! Sheesh! If only we could write as fast as he can draw, we'd retire wealthy!

• Berni Wrightson's illustrating an Elliot Maggin **Batman** script that pits the Masked Manhunter against a vampire!

• The previously announced Ernie Chua pencilled issue of **THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD** has been postponed, but will be rescheduled later this year. Meanwhile, Jim Aparo is pencilling and inking the **Batman-Swamp Thing** issue.

• Mike Grell will be doing some pencilling on the **Green Lantern** series in **THE FLASH**.

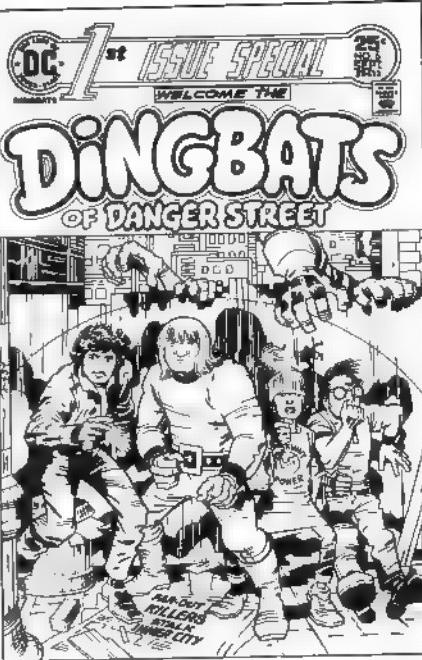
Here's some super-size news about our line of \$1 mags. Our **LIMITED COLLECTORS' EDITION OF STORIES FROM THE BIBLE** is making all the news programs across the country, and

is getting rave reviews. If you haven't gotten a copy yet, you'd better rush! And we'll be presenting editions featuring more tales from the greatest book ever written. Another volume of Old Testament tales under the guidance of Joe Kubert, later this year, and a volume of New Testament stories for Christmas giving prepared by the team of Shelly Mayer and Nestor Redondo over editor Joe Orlando's layouts.

When new magazines are added, some old ones must disappear—that's a fundamental law of the comics universe. If not, we'd all collapse of overwork. So bid a fond farewell to **THE SHADOW** (as of #12) and **TALES OF GHOST CASTLE** (as of #3). There may be a couple more slow sellers departing in the near future, but that's it for the moment. Not bad considering that we're starting about a dozen new titles!

with the **Justice League**, so editor/writer Gerry Conway is taking six **JSA** stars, and adding three new heroes to create a subtly different group. And other **JSA** members and Golden Age heroes will no doubt pop up from time to time. Regular stars of the mag include **Hawkman**, **The Flash**, **Green Lantern** (these are the original bearers of those time-honored names, of

course), **Doctor Fate**, **Doctor Mid-Nite** and **Wildcat**, the now-adult **Robin** (in a new costume), the **Star Spangled Kid**, and **Power Girl**. Uh . . . wait a minute . . . we forgot that you don't know who **Power Girl** is! Well, she's the **Supergirl** of Earth-2 . . . more or less. (Joe Orlando's sketch at the right illustrates the young lady.) Ric Estrada will be laying out this mag for an as-yet-unchosen in-



ker. #58 on sale in September.

We've mentioned Joe Kubert's new battle mag before, but here's the scoop. It's titled **BLITZKRIEG**, and it goes one step beyond the concept of Kubert's highly acclaimed **Enemy Ace** series. It tells the story entirely from the



Not to mention the currently available **SUPERMAN**, **SECRET ORIGINS OF THE SUPER-VILLAINS**, and upcoming **DICK TRACY** and **SUPER-FRIENDS** volumes (and wait till you see the new art that Alex Toth did for the **SUPER-FRIENDS** issue!).

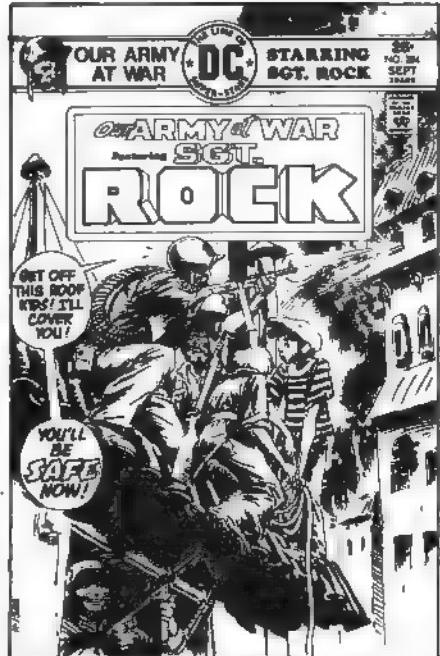


German point of view. Only Bob Kanigher would attempt such a script, and he's got Ric Estrada working double time to get the art just right, and it's coming your way in October.

By now you've built up plenty of curiosity about our new 50¢ titles, so here's the scoop: the first one out is **BATMAN FAMILY**, which debuts in June. It will feature the Batgirl-Robin team-up originally slated for **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #6** (by Elliot Maggin and Mike Grell), and thereafter will feature stories of both characters with team-ups every third or fourth issue. The reprints will feature the other characters who have starred in **BATMAN** over the years.

HOUSE OF SECRETS is undergoing a bit of revamping, as Abel's mystery stories get shrunk to about 8 pages per issue to make room for a brand new series—**THE PATCHWORK MAN**, which features the character who was introduced in **SWAMP THING #3**. Gerry Conway and Nestor Redondo are collaborating on the adventures of Gregori Arcane, and that means it's a sure winner.

And now for a couple of frequency changes: since **THE JOKER** is losing its "extra" 50¢ issue, it'll be shifting down to a regular bimonthly schedule. But **SWAMP THING** is so hot, that it's shifting from seven times a year to eight! Our eight times a year mags are also undergoing a shift as far as the specific months that they are due out in, but if you watch the Direct Currents listings, you shouldn't miss any issues!



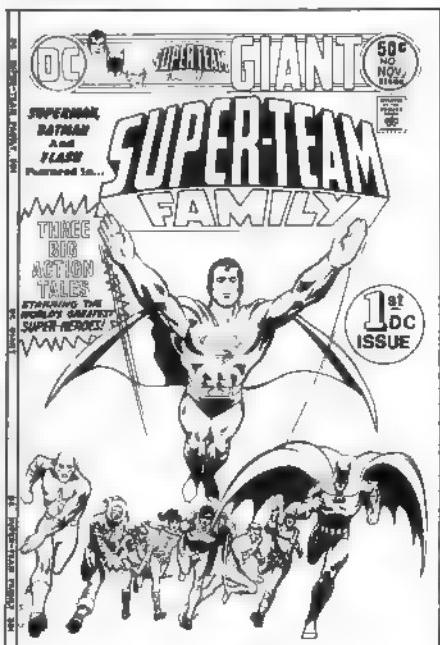
next issue—after all, it won't be out until October. And much the same is true of **STARMAN**, a cosmic comic coming from Conway (who'll be writing and editing this one) in October.

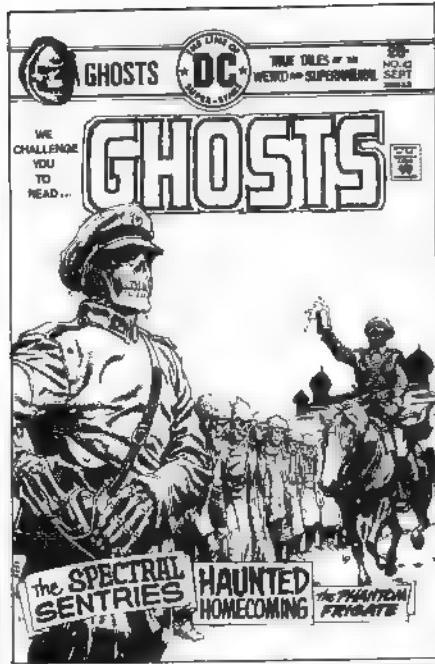
And last but not least, October will see the release of the group you've been clamoring for—**THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS**, a collection of the old Quality Comics Group characters: Uncle Sam, The Ray, The Black Condor, Doll Man, The Human Bomb, and Phantom Lady! Scripts and editing by Gerry Conway.



originally for **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL**, but editor Gerry Conway decided they would fit better here. As of #4, the mag will get a regular writer—Aquaman's own Paul Levitz, who, coincidentally, is Gerry's assistant—and so will be picking most of the reprints for the back of the mag. The first issue's out in July.

CODE NAME: ASSASSIN is little more than a concept right now, but you can watch for more details of this new Conway-edited, Skeates-scripted mag





JUNE COMICS LISTING

() **OUR ARMY AT WAR #284 (September)**. Sgt. Rock and the combat-happy joes of Easy Co. have to go on a dangerous mission codenamed "Link-Up" (Bob Kanigher and Doug Wildey). Plus a **Medal Of Honor** story about Captain Elrod, written and illustrated by Norm Maurer. Cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the first week in June)

() **GHOSTS #42 (September)**. Three haunting true tales of the weird and the supernatural: "The Spectral Sentries" (art by Lee Elias), "The Phantom Frigate" (art by E.R. Cruz), and "Nightmare of Death" (art by Fred Carrillo). Cover by Luis Dominguez. (On sale the first week in June)

() **YOUNG ROMANCE #207 (September/October)**. More tender tales of love by editor Joe Simon. (On sale the first week in June)

() **THE JOKER #3 (September/October)**. An issue that comic fans will especially enjoy takes **The Joker** into battle with a comic artist, and the manhunter in motley—**The Creeper!** Denny O'Neil scripted "The Last Ha-Ha," which introduces the artistic talents of Ernie Chua and Garcia Lopez to this series. Cover by Dick Giordano. (On sale the first week in June)

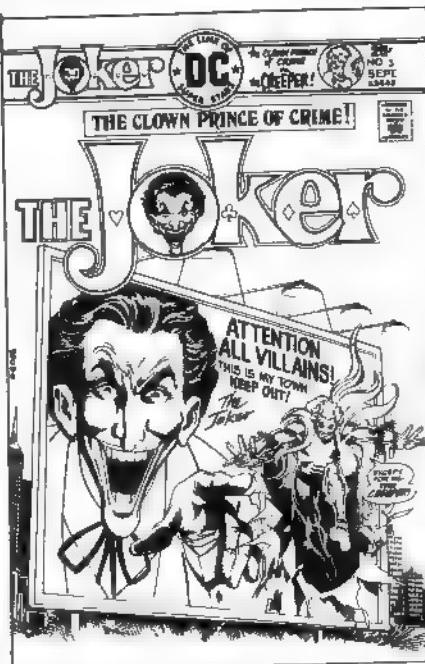
() **SWAMP THING #18 (September)**. Once Ponce De Leon quested the Southeast for the Fountain of Youth—today society sends its old people there

to wait out their last years. But what if the citizens of one of these retirement homes decided to tamper with the aging process, and use the arcane arts to rejuvenate themselves? They might kill Matt Cable, Abigail Arcane, and Bolt, who have wandered into "The Village Of The Doomed"—unless the **Swamp Thing** can stop them. Script by David Michelinie, art and cover by Nestor Redondo. (On sale the first week in June)

() **KAMANDI #33 (September)**. Take a wild ride on an Unidentified Flying Object of the future with the last boy on Earth and Ben Boxer—and be a witness to the strange saga of "Blood And Fire" (script, pencils by Jack Kirby, inks by D. Bruce Berry). Cover by Kirby and Berry. (On sale the first week in June)

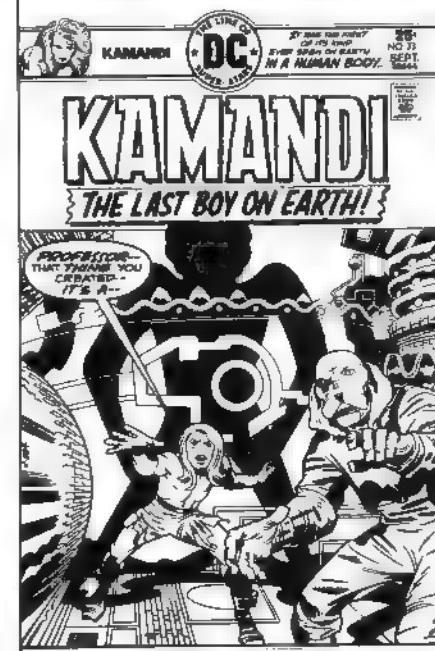
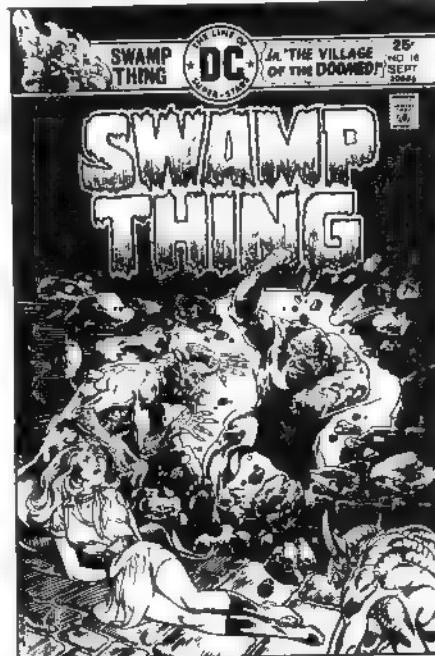
() **TALES OF GHOST CASTLE #3 (September/October)**. Lucien the librarian bids a fond farewell to his short-lived home—but he'll be back in a future issue of **SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE** in order to use up the remaining **TALES OF GHOST CASTLE**. In this issue, the first and only one edited by Joe Orlando: "The Demon's Here To Stay" (Jack Oleck, Ernie Chua and Bill Draut), "A Very Private Hell" (Bob Kanigher and Frank Redondo), and "The Eye Of The Beholder" (Mal Warwick and Bill Draut). Cover by Luis Dominguez. (On sale the first week in June)

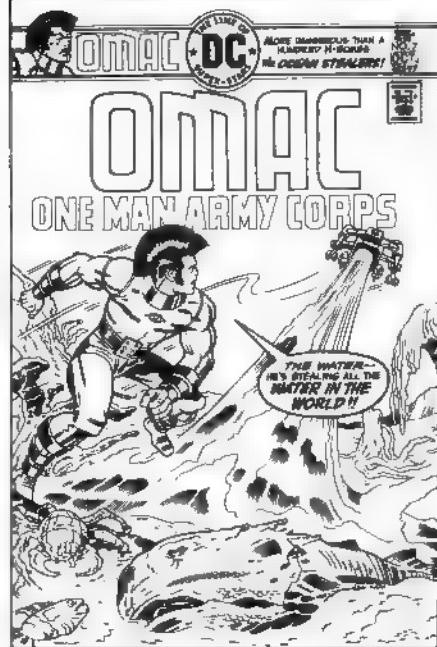
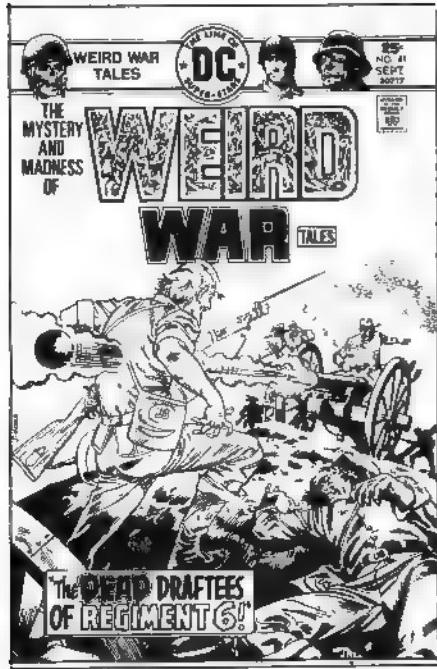
() **TOR #3 (September/October)**. In the world of one million B.C., Tor journeys to the "Isle Of Fire" in this issue's lead story. Plus a "Danny Dreams" story rounding out the issue. Scripts, art and cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the first week in June)



() **WEIRD WESTERN TALES #30 (September/October)**. Jonah Hex arrives in Richmond, Virginia, for his long-awaited confrontation with the man with the golden cane... and is accused of betraying the Confederacy in "The Trial." This issue concludes the origin of **Jonah Hex** sequence begun in #29. Script by Michael Fleisher, art by George Moliterni. (On sale the first week in June)

() **THE BATMAN FAMILY #1 (October/November)**. Introducing a new 50¢ mag that will star characters who got their start in the **Batman** magazines. Kicking off the series is the all-new **Batgirl-Robin** novel originally scheduled for **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #6**, "The Invader From Hell" (Elliot Maggin and Mike Grell). Plus "Commissioner Gordon's Death-Threat" (Bob Kane), "The Challenge Of

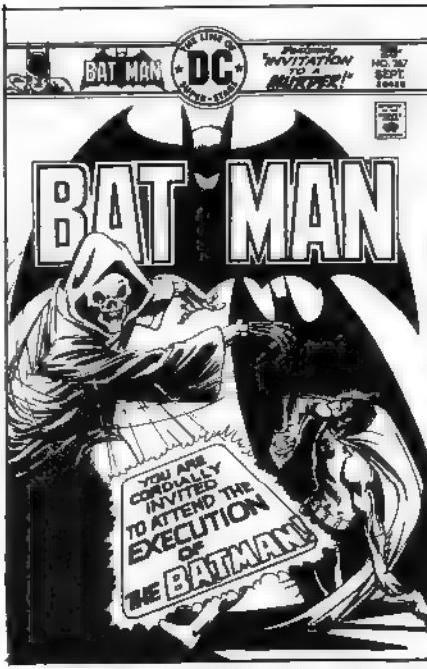




() **THE WITCHING HOUR #58 (September)**. Three tales of midnight madness: "Camp Fear" (George Kashdan and John Calnan), "Who Stalked By Night?" (Carl Wessler and Fred Carrillo), and "The Witch Of Raven's Pass" (Wessler and Ernie Guanido). Cover by Luis Dominguez. (On sale the third week in June)

() **OUR FIGHTING FORCES #159 (September)**. Johnny Cloud, Captain Storm, Gunner & Sarge—**The Losers** in a brand-new battle blockbuster from Jack Kirby and Mike Royer. (On sale the third week in June)

() **JUSTICE, INC. #3 (September/October)**. Denny O'Neill moves into doing his own original stories, as **The Avenger** and his intrepid band take on the menace of "The Monster Bug" (art



by Jack Kirby and Mike Royer). Cover by Kirby and Al Milgrom. (On sale the third week in June)

() **STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES #191 (September)**. The Unknown Soldier begins a two-issue showdown with the Nazi Lieutenant who has been hunting him since "A Death In The Chapel" in #187. But what will be the "Decision At Volstadt"—death for the Unknown Soldier, perhaps? Script by David Michelinie, art by Gerry Talaoc Plus "Stuka" by Sid Check and Buddy Gernale. Cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the third week in June)

() **THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #121 (September)**. Batman joins forces with the Metal Men on a train ride into terror—as they attempt to protect the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution from being destroyed on "The Doomsday Express" (Bob Haney and Jim Aparo). Cover by Aparo. (On sale the third week in June)

() **THE FLASH #236 (September)**. Watch for two surprising guest stars in this issue as **The Flash** continues his search for his missing wife—only to find that she's "Nowhere On The Face Of The Earth"?! Script by Cary Bates, art by Irv Novick and Tex Blaisdell. Cover by Mike Grell. (On sale the third week in June)

() **G.I. COMBAT #182 (September)**. The crew of **The Haunted Tank** has its hours numbered by the ominous ticking of "The Combat Clock" (Bob Kanigher and Sam Glanzman). Plus: "Invasion? Who's There?" (Kanigher and Ric Estrada). Cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the third week in June)

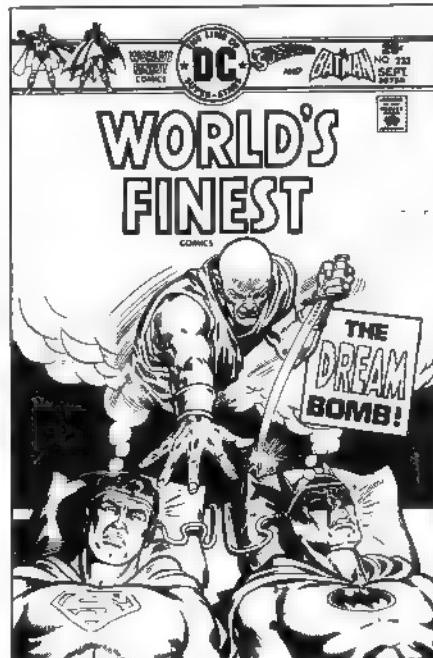
() **SUPERMAN #291 (September)**. Two timely tales in a row must mean something, but we're not sure what. At any rate, a super-wristwatch turns into "The Time-Powered Peril" for the Man Of Steel in this Cary Bates, Curt Swan and Bob Oksner tale. Cover by Dick Giordano. (On sale the third week in June)

() **THE UNEXPECTED #168 (September)**. Three fright fables: "Freak Accident" (George Kashdan and Alfredo Alcala), "Who Killed Raggedy Ann?" (Kashdan and Gerry Talaoc), and "The Patchwork Pal" (Bill Dennehy and Fior Dery). Cover by Luis Dominguez. (On sale the third week in June)

() **SHAZAM! #20 (September/October)**. The Marvel Family works together to investigate "The Strange And Terrible Disappearance of Maxwell Zodiac" in this novel-length tale by Elliot Maggin and Kurt Schaffenberger. Cover by Schaffenberger. (On sale the last week in June)

() **WEIRD MYSTERY TALES #22 (September)**. Celebrate "A Death At The Races" with Michael Fleisher and Franc Reyes, then "Meet My Murderer" (Bob Kanigher and Tony Henson), and have "A Reckoning In Eden" (Mal Warwick and Bill Draut). All this plus Witch's Tails by Sergio Aragones. Cover by Ernie Chua. (On sale the last week in June)

() **CLAW THE UNCONQUERED #3 (September/October)**. Claw encounters a Centaurress, and takes up the quest for "The Bloodspear" in this latest sword & sorcery saga. Script by David Michelinie, art by Ernie Chua and Pat Boyette. Cover by Chua. (On sale the last week in June)



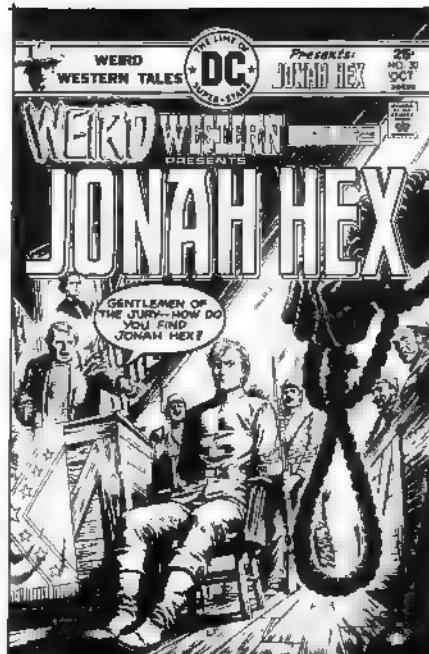
"The Man-Bat" (Frank Robbins, Neal Adams and Dick Giordano), and Alfred as "The Great Handcuff King" (Jerry Robinson). Cover by Mike Grell. (On sale the first week in June)

() **HOUSE OF MYSTERY #235 (September)**. Double-danger issue, as the devil's work is done in two chilling stories: "Wings Of Black Death" (a medieval tale of the macabre by **SWAMP THING** team David Michelinie and Nestor Redondo), and "Spawn Of Evil" (Maxine Fabe and Ramona Fradon). Cover by Luis Dominguez. (On sale the second week in June)

() **JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #122 (September)**. Clearing up confusion time, as we delve into the casebook of the **Justice League** for an untold tale which finally reveals how the members learned each others' secret identities. "The Great Identity Crisis" is recounted by Marty Pasko (making his **JLA** debut), Dick Dillin and Frank McLaughlin. Cover by Mike Grell. (On sale the second week in June)

() **KORAK, SON OF TARZAN #59 (September/October)**. Korak is young enough that we could understand his attending school, but we're baffled by the weird place where he ended up going for an education. Beware the "School For Slaughter" by Bob Kanigher, Joe Kubert, and Rudy Floresse. Plus the concluding chapter of "The Deadly Motion Picture" and a cover by Kubert. Last issue in this format. (On sale the second week in June)

() **WEIRD WAR TALES #41 (September)**. Time out for another novel-length special story, as Michael Fleisher and Garcia Lopez make their **WEIRD WAR TALES** debut with a Civil



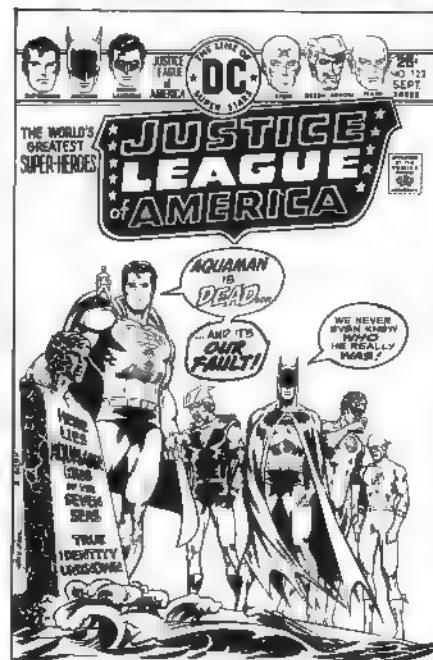
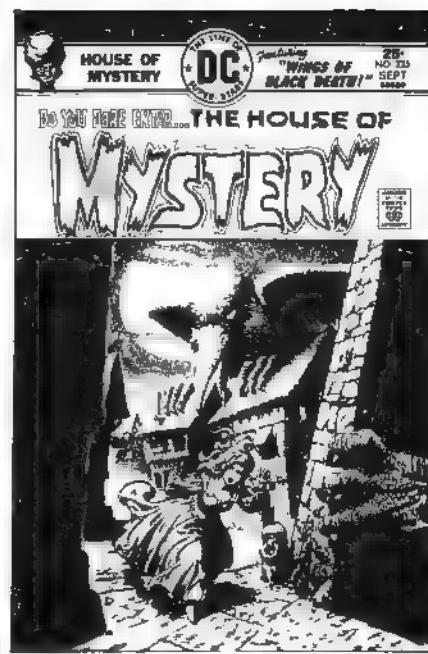
War story—"The Dead Draftees Of Regiment Six." **Jonah Hex** fans should watch this story carefully, because Fleisher and Lopez will be teaming up on about half the Jonah Hex stories once **WEIRD WESTERN TALES** goes monthly. Cover by Lopez. (On sale the second week in June)

() **OMAC #7 (September/October)**. Most of the world is water, so it's a big problem when someone starts stealing H2O—big enough for the One Man Army Corps to be called out to stop "The Ocean Stealers" (script and pencils by Jack Kirby, inks by D. Bruce Berry). Cover by Kirby and Berry. (On sale the second week in June)

() **BATMAN #267 (September)**. Long-time comics, pulp, tv and radio writer David V. Reed (also known as Coram Nobis) makes his Bat-debut, and issues the Gotham Guardian an "Invitation To A Murder"—his own! Art by Ernie Chua and Dick Giordano. (On sale the second week in June)

() **WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #232 (September)**. The Super-Sons take a vacation and turn this issue over to their dads, as **Superman** and **Batman** join forces to defuse the macabre menace of "The Dream Bomb." Script by Bob Haney, pencils by Dick Dillin, and introducing the incredible inking of John Calnan to this series. Cover by Ernie Chua and Calnan. (On sale the second week in June)

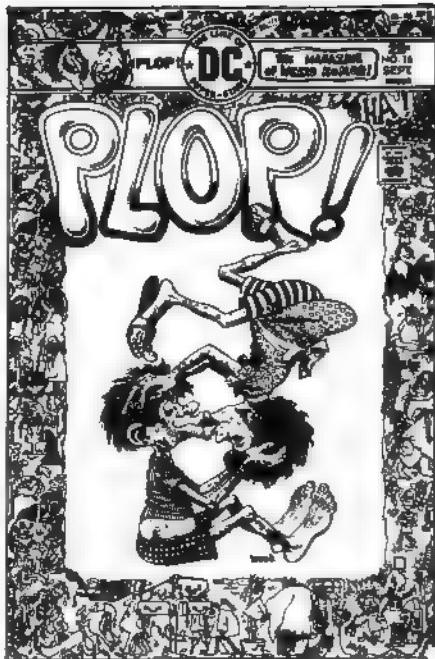
() **PLOP! #18 (September)**. Special Romance issue of **Plop!**, as we continue to prove Murphy's Law ("Anything that can go wrong, will!"). Intros by Sergio Aragones and Steve Skeates pit Cain, Abel and Eve against one of the weirdest loving couples you're likely to



meet, and then there's: "Love Is A Dandy" (a flowery love story by Skeates, Steve Ditko, and Wally Wood), "The Make-Out Queen Of Lord Byron High" (Skeates and Ric Estrada), Monster and Historical Plops by Don Edwing and Dave Manak, Lover's Plops, and a Wood cover. (On sale the second week in June)

() **SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #211 (September)**. Death comes to greet the Legion—or does it? "The Ultimate Revenge" is a chilling tale of vengeance by Jim Shooter and Mike Grell. Plus the inside story of what happened to the original Legion clubhouse—"The Legion's Lost Home" by Cary Bates and Grell. Cover by Grell. (On sale the second week in June)





Abel's Fables. Cover by Berni Wrightson. (On sale the last week in June)

() **ADVENTURE COMICS #441 (September/October).** Aquaman returns to a starring role after four years, as he takes over the lead spot in **ADVENTURE**. And to start off his new career, he faces "The Pirate Who Plundered Atlantis" (Paul Levitz and Jim Aparo). Plus the latest chapter of the **Seven Soldiers of Victory** serial—**The Star Spangled Kid** in "Dead End Animals" (Joe Samachson and Ernie Chua). Cover by Jim Aparo. (On sale the last week in June)

JULY COMICS LISTING

() **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #6 (October).** **THE DINGBATS OF DANGER STREET** are here to add new dimensions to the word "Kid Gang!" Script and pencils by Jack Kirby, inks by Mike Royer. Cover by Kirby and Royer. (On sale the last week in June)

() **ACTION COMICS #451 (September).** You've heard of the man who sold the Brooklyn Bridge? Well, meet the man who bought the Metro Narrows Bridge as **Superman** gets involved in "The Great Super-Hero Contest" by Jim Shooter, Curt Swan and Garcia Lopez. Plus **Green Arrow** and **Black Canary** in "The Day The Dreaming Dies" by Elliot Maggin and Mike Grell. Cover by Bob Oksner. (On sale the last week in June)

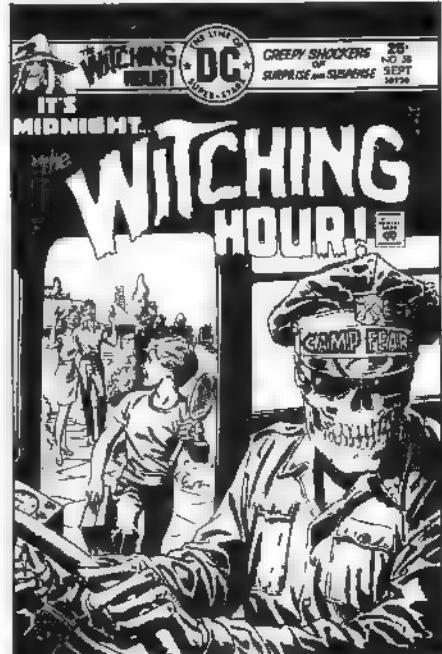
() **DETECTIVE COMICS #451 (September).** Batman's on the trail of an underworld hit man, but he doesn't know who it is—or who the assassin's next victim will be! "The Batman's Burden" is by Denny O'Neil and Ernie Chua. Plus solo-action with **Robin**, the Teen Wonder, as "The Parking Lot Bandit Strikes Again" (Bob Rozakis, Al Milgrom, and Terry Austin). Cover by Dick Giordano. (On sale the last week in June)

() **TARZAN #241 (September).** Part two of the Edgar Rice Burroughs novel "Tarzan And The Castaways" by Joe Kubert and Franc Reyes. Cover by Kubert. (On sale the last week in June)

() **HOUSE OF SECRETS #135 (September).** Two terror tales: "The Vegetable Garden" (Michael Fleisher and Leopoldo Duranona), and "Big Fish In A Small Pond" (Mike Pellowski, Steve Skeates and E.R. Cruz); plus

collaborative effort between Cary Bates (plot and breakdowns) and Elliot Maggin (dialogue)—with Cary, Elliot, and even editor Julie Schwartz (plus Carmine Infantino) showing up in the story! Surely the strangest **JLA-JSA** tale to date, "Where On Earth Am I?" is illustrated by Dick Dillin and Frank McLaughlin. Cover by Ernie Chua. (On sale the first week in July)

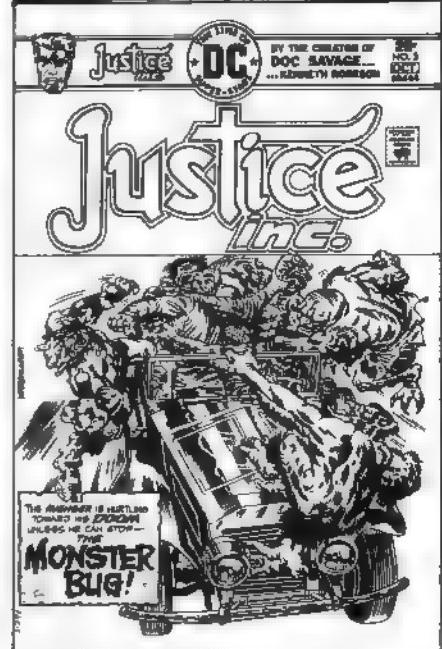
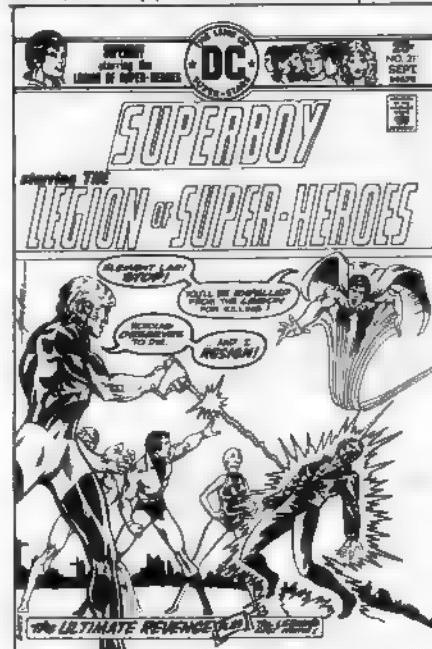
() **SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE #4 (October/November).** A host of hosts join up to present three terror tales: "The Face Of Death" (Jack Oleck and E.R. Cruz), "Bird's Eye View" (Maxene Fabe and Nestor Redondo), and "This Rat Will A-Maze You" (George Kashdan and Paul Kirchner); an intro page by Steve Skeates and Redondo, and a cover by Luis Dominguez. (On sale the first week in July)



() **OUR ARMY AT WAR #285 (October).** Sgt. Rock's orders are to "Bring Him Back!" Who's him? Ask Bob Kanigher and Doug Wildey! Plus a **Gallery of War** story—"Royal Flush" (Kanigher and Ric Estrada). Cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the first week in July)

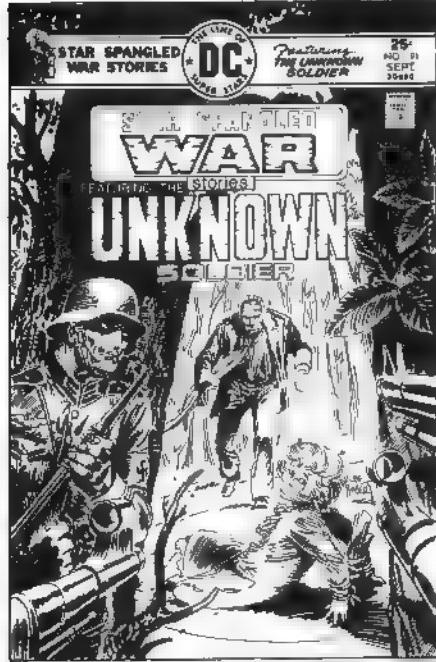
() **GHOSTS #43 (October).** Three tales calculated to make you believe in **Ghosts**: "The River Phantoms" (art by Frank Redondo), "Specter In The Stone" (art by J.D. Igente), and "Three Corpses On A Rope" (art by Lee Elias). Cover by Luis Dominguez. (On sale the first week in July)

() **JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #123 (October).** Here's a sure sign of summer—the annual **Justice League-Justice Society** classic has rolled around again. And this year it's a double team-up, 'cause the script is a



() LIMITED COLLECTORS' EDITION #C-38—SUPERMAN (October/November). An all-star collection of some of the most unusual Superman stories ever published: "Autograph, Please"; "The Mxyzptlk-Susie Alliance"; "The Juvenile Delinquents of Space" and "Zigi and Zagi's Trap For Superman" (a two-part story with art by Jim Mooney); and "Superman's Day Of Doom." The cover is a Bob Oksner Superman drawing, against a process photo of the Statue of Liberty, with Superman giving a lift to a youngster to celebrate this all children's issue. (On sale the first week in July)

() LIMITED COLLECTORS' EDITION #C-39—SECRET ORIGINS OF THE SUPERVILLAINS (October/



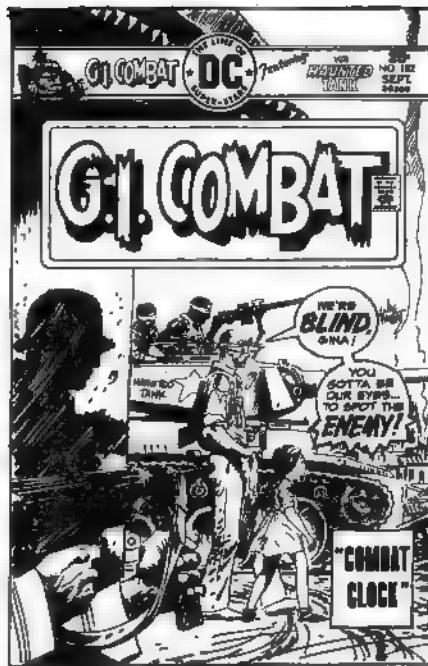
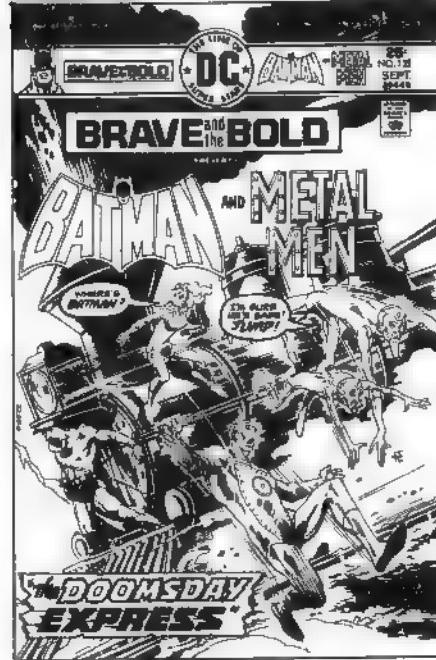
November). Featuring the world's evilest people: Captain Cold's first fight with The Flash (a hitherto unreprinted classic from Showcase)—"The Coldest Man On Earth" (John Broome, Carmine Infantino, and Frank Giacola); "How Luthor Met Superboy" (art by Al Plastino); The Joker in "The Man Behind The Red Hood"; "The Origin Of Terraman" (Cary Bates, Dick Dillin and Neal Adams), and Captain Marvel in "The Origin Of Sivana." Cover by Dick Giordano. (On sale the first week in July)

() YOUNG LOVE #118 (October/November). Romantic stories by editor Joe Simon, designed to make your heart throb. (On sale the first week in July)

() KAMANDI #34 (October). Gerry Conway takes over as editor, with the saga of "Pretty Pyra"—the incredible alien fireball! Script and pencils by Jack Kirby, Inks by D. Bruce Berry. Cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the first week in July)

() PHANTOM STRANGER #39 (October—November). "Death Calls Twice For A Deadman" when Cleveland Brand, Lorna, and Tiny are teleported from the Hills Circus to the hideout of the Sensel, as the Deadman saga begins to intertwine with a three-part Phantom Stranger adventure. Script by Paul Levitz, art by Fred Carrillo. Plus part two of the Black Orchid serial—"The Legion Of The Black Orchid" (Michael Fleisher, Russell Carley, and Carrillo). Cover by Jim Aparo. (On sale the first week in July)

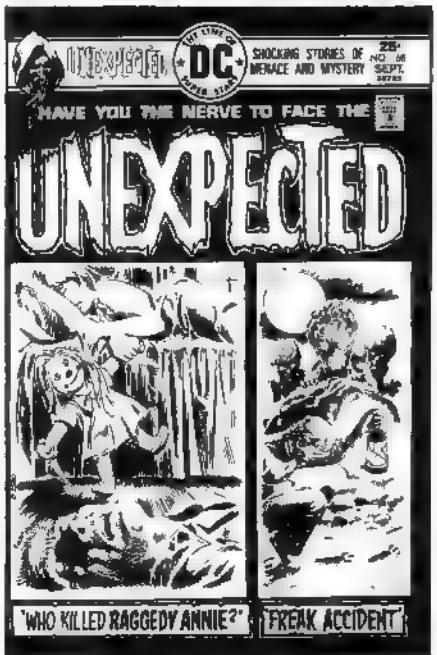
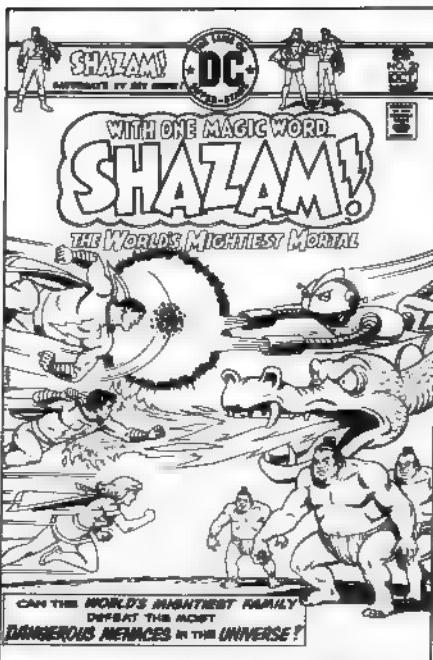
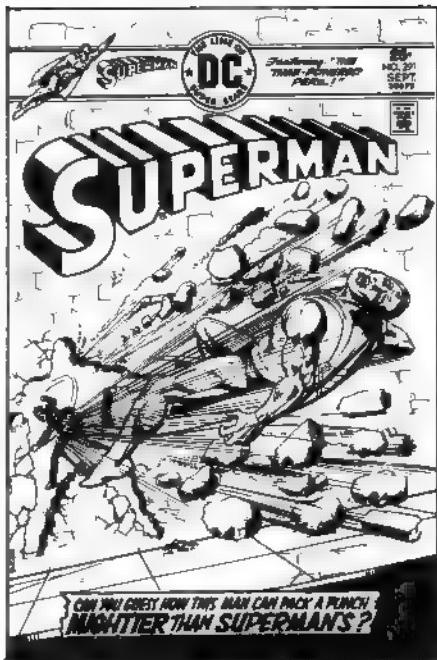
() THE SUPERMAN FAMILY #173 (October/November). Jimmy Olsen stars in a new novel-length adventure—



"The Menace Of The Micro-Monsters" by Cary Bates and Kurt Schaffenberger. Plus: Lois Lane "Beware Of The Bug-Belle" (E. Nelson Bridwell and Schaffenberger), "The Villain Who Married Supergirl", and "My Super Pet, Krypto". Cover by Schaffenberger. (On sale the second week in July.)

() DC SPECIAL #18 (October/November). Now bi-monthly, this issue spotlights DC's great disasters! Whoops—that's not what it sounds like, gang—it's a collection of stories featuring disastrous occurrences: The Flash and Green Lantern in "The Catastrophic Crimes Of Major Disaster" (Gardner Fox, Gil Kane and Sid Greene), Superman as "The Super-Human Bomb" (Jim Shooter and Wayne Boring), and Captain Marvel vs. "The Atomic Fire." (On sale the second week in July)

() SUPER-TEAM FAMILY #1 (October/November). This new 64-page mag starts off with an all reprint issue due to deadline problems, but beginning next issue, editor Gerry Conway promises new team thrills in every issue. Classics included are: Superman and Batman versus "The Superman-Batman Revenge Squads" (Leo Dorfman and Neal Adams), The Teen Titans as "Stepping Stones For A Giant Killer" (Mike Friedrich, Gil Kane and Wally Wood), and a super-villain team-up, as Captain Cold and Heat Wave join forces to make The Flash a "Tempting Target Of The Temperature Twins" (Gardner Fox, Carmine Infantino and Joe Giella). Cover by Mike Grell (On sale the second week in July)



House of Mystery issue, from the cover by Berni Wrightson to the Cain's Game Room page by Lore, this issue captures much of the feel of Orlando's early HOMs. Twin terror tales included are: "Death Played A Sideshow" (Coram Nobis, Steve Ditko and Mike Royer) and "Deep Sleep" (Jack Oleck, Paul Kirchner and Neal Adams). (On sale the second week in July)

() STALKER #3 (October/November). The man with the stolen soul continues his quest, as it takes him to the land of "The Freezing Flames Of The Burning Isle" (Paul Levitz, Steve Ditko, and Wally Wood). Cover by Ditko and Wood. (On sale the second week in July)

() SWAMP THING #19 (October). Originally scheduled for the SWAMP THING Giant issue, this issue's tale has

been rescheduled for two issues of the 25¢ size magazine. "A Second Time To Die" features the first half of Swamp Thing's battle against his arm that grew a new body—a new mindless body! Script by Gerry Conway (filling in for David Michelinie), art by Nestor Redondo. Cover by Redondo. (On sale the second week in July)

() BATMAN #268 (October). The costumed villain cycle continues as the Caped Crusader is caught by a new foe, The Sheikh in a "Murder Masquerade" (Denny O'Neill, Irv Novick, and an as-yet-unchosen inker). (On sale the second week in July)

() SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #212 (October). Two tales of the universe's most unique super-teens, by Jim Shooter and Mike Grell: "Last Fight For A Legionnaire" and "Death Stroke At Dawn." Cover by Grell. (On sale the third week in July)

() WONDER WOMAN #220 (October / November). The Amazon Princess' trials continue, as The Atom monitors her battle with Chronos—"The Man Who Wiped Out Time" (Marty Pasko and Dick Giordano) (On sale the third week in July)

() PLOP! #17 (October). The Plop people go to the roller coaster, for an assortment of Plops: "The World's Greatest Gumshoe" (Steve Skeates and Dave Manak), "The Old Butterfly Story" (Skeates and Frank Robbins), "The Tunnel" (Coram Nobis and Larry Rip Rippee), "The Ploosh Maker" (Skeates and Lee Marrs), intros by Sergio Aragones and Skeates, The Isle of Plop, Monster Plops by Aragones, Historical Plops, and Prison Plops.

Cover by Basil Wolverton. (On sale the third week in July)

() OUR FIGHTING FORCES #160 (October). Another Kirby classic featuring the military men who dare to defy their nickname—The Losers! (On sale the third week in July)

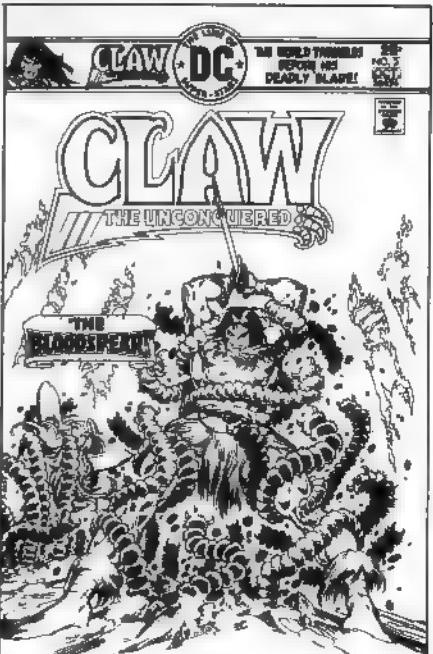
() WITCHING HOUR #58 (October). Another fear-fest from our three bewitching hostesses: "Reunion In Blood" (George Kashdan and Ruben); "The Hanging Judge" (script by Carl Wessler), and "The Corpse Wore Shoes" (Wessler and E.R. Cruz). (On sale the third week in July)

() WEIRD WAR TALES #42 (October). In this issue: "Old Soldiers Never Die" (Jack Oleck, Ernie Chua and Ricardo Villamonte), "Twice Dead" (Oleck and Quico Redondo), and "The Year 700 ATB" (Shelly Mayer and Alfredo Alcala). Cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the third week in July)

() STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES #192 (October). Concluding the battle between The Unknown Soldier and Lt. Rico Strada—"Vendetta" (David Michelinie and Gerry Talaoc). Plus "Something To Kill For" (Jack Oleck and Quico Redondo). Cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the third week in July)

() WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #233 (October). The Super-Sons of Superman and Batman are back—but now they're trapped on a "World Without Men!" Script by Bob Haney, art by Dick Dillin and John Calnan. Cover by (On sale the fourth week in July)

() THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #122 (October). The Masked



Manhunter meets up with the **Swamp Thing** again, as Gotham City is struck by a plant peril in "The Hour Of The Beast" (Bob Haney and Jim Aparo). Cover by Aparo. (On sale the fourth week in July)

() **BEOWULF #4** (October/November). The Dragon Slayer continues his quest into "The Valley In The Shadow Of Death" (Michael Uslan and Ricardo Villamonte). Cover by Villamonte. (On sale the fourth week in July)

() **G.I. COMBAT #183** (October). Jeb Stuart and his Haunted Tank crew take on an unusual mission when they escort "6 Stallions to Hell—and Back!" Script by Bob Kanigher, art by Sam Glanzman. Plus: "Triple Booby Trap" by Kanigher and Ric Estrada. Cover by Joe Kubert. (On sale the fourth week in July)

() **SUPERMAN #292** (October). Delve into the background of **Superman's** arch-foe and meet "The Luthor Nobody Knows" (Elliot Maggin, Curt Swan, and Bob Oksner). Plus **The Private Life of Clark Kent** is complicated by a man who declares "I Don't Like Your Face!" (Marty Pasko, Curt Swan and Al Milgrom). (On sale the fourth week in July)

() **THE UNEXPECTED #169** (October). The title's the fact—we don't know what's going in this issue! (On sale the fourth week in July)

() **FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #7** (October). **THE CREEPER** goes it alone to battle "The Menace Of The Human Firefly" in Michael Fleisher-Steve Ditko-Mike Royer tale. (On sale the fourth week in July)



() **HOUSE OF SECRETS #138** (October). Two chillers, and two special feature pages: "Buried Treasure" (Jack Oleck and Franc Reyes), "Last Voyage Of The Lady Luck" (Maxene Fabe and Ramona Fradon), Abel's Fables, and an intro page by Paul Levitz and Nestor Redondo. Cover by Berni Wrightson. (On sale the last week in July)

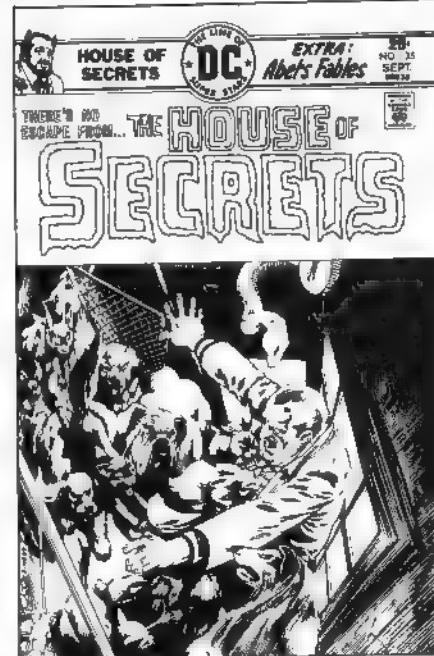
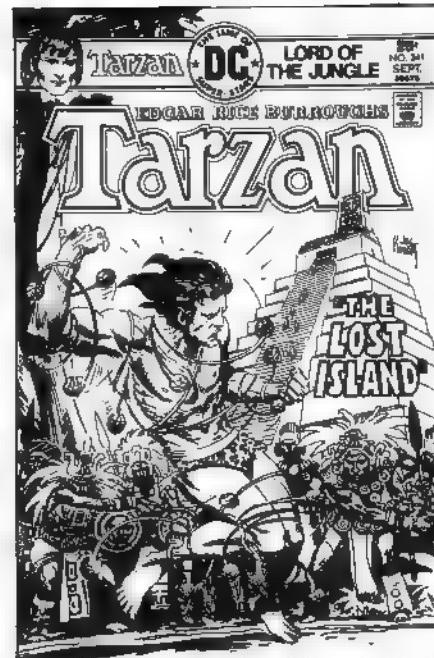
() **KONG THE UNTAMED #3** (October/November). Kong and Gurat go underground into the incredible world inside "The Caves Of Doom"—plot by Jack Oleck, dialogue by Gerry Conway, art by Alfredo Alcala. (On sale the last week in July)

() **TARZAN #242** (October). Part three of the adaptation of "Tarzan and The Castaways" by Joe Kubert and Franc Reyes. Cover by Kubert. (On sale the last week in July)

() **WEIRD MYSTERY TALES #23** (October). Two fright fables: "Fair Exchange" (Sergio Aragones, Steve Skeates and Wally Wood) and "The Quiz Show" (Michael Fleisher and Fred Carrillo). Cover by Ernie Chua. (On sale the last week in July)

() **KUNG FU FIGHTER #4** (October/November). A new Kung Fu thriller starring Richard Dragon, by Denny O'Neil and Jack Kirby. (On sale the last week in July)

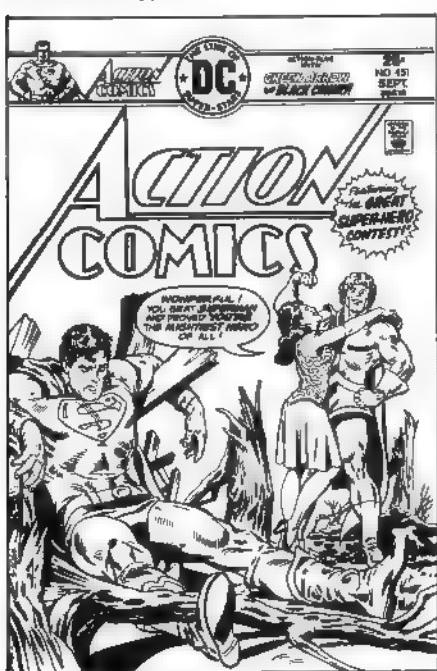
() **ACTION COMICS #452** (October). Superman faces a foe who grows stronger every time he loses a fight—meet "The Loser ... and New Champion!" in a Jim Shooter-Curt Swan story. Plus the conclusion of the latest **Green Arrow-Black Canary** adventure, "When Madmen Rule The



World" (Elliot Maggin and Mike Grell). (On sale the last week in July)

() **THE SANDMAN #5** (October/November). Reality is in danger—and it's up to **The Sandman** to stop "The Invasion Of The Frog Men" in the latest Michael Fleisher-Jack Kirby-Mike Royer fantasy. Cover by Kirby and Royer. (On sale the last week in July)

() **DETECTIVE COMICS #452** (October). Batman battles a criminal version of the stock exchange in "Crackdown On The Crime Exchange" by David V. Reed, illustrated by Ernie Chua and Mike Royer. Plus: Hawkman flies again against "The Curse Of The Ancient Weapons" (E Nelson Bridwell and Garcia Lopez). (On sale the last week in July)

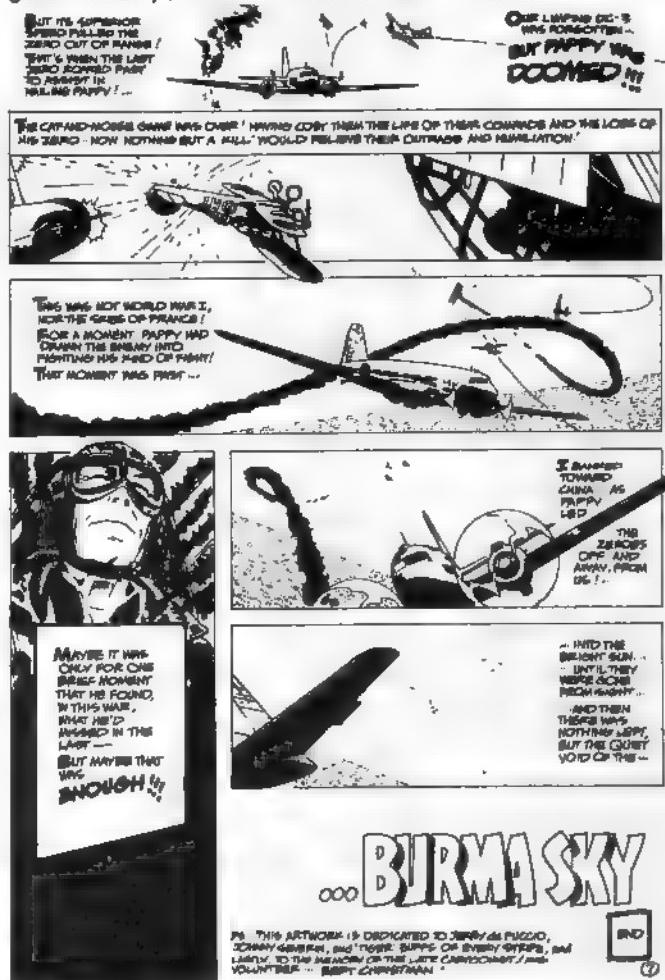


How a Comic Is Created

by ANTHONY TOLLIN

In the previous installments of our behind-the-scenes look at the many aspects that go into the creation of a finished comic book, we discussed the myriad duties of the editor and his writers. Now our spotlight falls on the artist; the craftsman who fleshes out the ideas of the editorial team, blending them with his own visual concepts to create the masterworks you purchase at the newsstand.

Alex Toth's use of felt-tipped markers in his inking gives a crisp, individual look to his stories.



We begin just after the plot has been approved and the script written. Now an artist must be carefully selected by the editor. His talents and style must fit the requirements of the subject matter and the mood the editor wishes to convey. Luckily, DC has more than its share of top-notch talents, skilled artisans like Jack Kirby, Joe Kubert, Curt Swan, Jim Aparo, and DC's newest super-star, Mike Grell. To such as these goes the task of imparting a visual reality to the writer's script.

For Mike Grell, the work begins when he returns home with the script, reading it thoroughly before ever setting pencil to paper "so I don't get to the last page and discover a surprise the writer added that should have been included on page three."

Then comes the all-important job laying out the story. Panel size, shape, and sequence will all affect the way the reader will interpret the story, providing a sense of time and a set for the action to be played upon. Because layout is so important, some pencillers, especially when they're just starting in the business, break down the story first on smaller sheets of paper, transferring their layouts to the larger, 10" by 15" drawing surface only when they're certain that their rough layouts are satisfactory. Other artists, like Mike Grell, prefer to do all their work directly on the finished page. "I generally don't do preliminary layouts. When I do sketches, I frequently find myself recopying a certain line rather than the feeling it should represent. The first time you draw a picture, you're drawing the action; the second time you're just recopying the picture itself. You lose the feeling you had with that first spontaneous reaction."

(Occasionally, the art breakdowns are completed before the dialogue itself is written. Mike Grell and Elliot Maggin have used a variety of the so-called "Marvel Method" in one of their Green Arrow stories. Mike presented a plot to Editor Julie Schwartz, carefully planning each page of the finished story. After conferring with Julie and Elliot and listening to their suggestions, Mike begins to lay out the rough pencils for the story. After Schwartz has an opportunity to check over the layouts, Elliot writes the dialogue and

captions, noting further revisions wherever necessary. When the lettering is completed, Mike tightens the pencils and inks the story. This system allows Mike a greater degree of freedom with his own breakdowns and storytelling than he would otherwise enjoy.)

Working on a sloped drawing table to prevent distortion, the penciller begins to tighten up the detail work to make it ready for the inker. At this point, a "morgue" or "swipe file" becomes a very valuable aid to the artist. "Good reference material is absolutely essential if you're going to make accurate drawings," insists Mike Grell. Mike's wife, Sandy, handles his morgue filing, dividing photos and other reference material into three main categories; "people" (with subdivisions including men, women, couples, groups, and mobs), "places" (interiors and exteriors, cities and rural areas), and "things" (cars, etc.). Sports photos can provide an artist with excellent examples of the figure in motion and frequently hold an honored position in an artist's "morgue".

Top right: The first page of script for WARLORD; Mike Grell's artful translation is shown on the next page. Bottom: Dick Giordano's exceptional use of line weights gives dimension to any pencils he inks. Note how the line varies to create the effect of weight and form.

Full page

Legend: Survival--the most fundamental of human dramas. It takes a special breed of man to stand in the face of overwhelming odds in a world where merely staying alive is the greatest challenge of all. This is the epic tale of such a man. They call him...

Logo: THE WARLORD

Full page splash: Dramatic action shot of Travis Morgan battling a small (slightly larger than man-size) dinosaur. Morgan wears a tattered flight suit and USAF survival vest. He is armed only with a knife, and fights with grim ferocity. Behind him, lying on the ground near a rock outcropping, is Tara, the savage Valkan girl. She looks like Raquel Welch in "I MILLION B.C." Her sword lies beside her. In the background, gigantic jungle foliage towers over them. Through a break in the trees, we see the jungle fading into the distance. There is no horizon.

Legend: Witness, if you will, a fragment out of time--a tableau of conflict that might have been acted out at the dawn of man--a battle for survival in a primeval forest--and, for TRAVIS MORGAN, a NIGHTMARE! When did it all begin? An hour ago? A day? A year? Morgan couldn't say for certain. In a world where time does not exist, a year of pleasure might seem but a fleeting moment, and a moment of agony...
IN ETERNITY!

ALLOW FOR TRIMMING--1 3/4"





WITNESS, IF YOU WILL, A FRAGMENT OUT OF TIME-- A TABLEAU OF CONFLICT THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACTED OUT IN THE DAWN OF MAN-- A BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL, IN A PRIMITIVE FOREST-- AND FOR SOMETHING FAR MORE MEANINGFUL-- AN ETERNITY!



WHEN DID IT ALL BEGIN? AN HOUR AGO? A DAY? A YEAR? NOBODY COULD SAY FOR CERTAIN. IN A WORLD WHERE TIME DOES NOT EXIST, A YEAR OF PLEASURE MIGHT BEEN BUT A FLEETING MOMENT, AND A MOMENT OF AGONY...AN ETERNITY!

Left: Mike Grell's pencilled splash page for WARLORD #1; Right: The completed inked version.

Like many artists, Grell uses an opaque projector (called an "art-o-graph") when working from a photo. This device allows an artist to project a picture of an airplane or a street scene directly onto his drawing surface and then trace it with far greater accuracy and speed than would be possible by laboriously constructing the scene from his own imagination. Changes can easily be made to fit the particular situation. "Some people call this cheating, but nothing could be further from the truth," insists Mike. "It's perfectly acceptable to lift a pose here and there, provided you add your own special touch to the finished drawing and don't simply steal someone else's work line for line. You have to bear in mind that we're in the business of producing a great number of drawings in a very short amount of time. Anything that saves time makes money."

Pencils complete, the editors reviews the story, comparing the panels with the script itself to make sure nothing has been left out and that the story is clearly told through the art, and sends the pages to the letterer (whose work will be spotlighted in the next chapter).

Finally, the pages are sent to an inker for delineation in sharp, clean black lines and shapes suitable for reproduction. Inkers generally use a wide variety of materials. Most prefer to work primarily with a brush, usually the Windsor-Newton series 7, #3, a top-quality brush with an exceptional point that offers a tremendous variety of line weights. Utilizing fine lines for background areas and bolder strokes for foreground figures, the inker creates a sense of perspective. Similarly, fine lines for topmost surfaces

and heavy lines on undersides create a sense of lighting, shadow, and weight. Linker extraordinary Dick Giordano has mastered the use of the brush. Studying his work, one instantly notices his exceptional use of a multitude of line weights to create a three-dimensional world on flat, two-dimensional page.

Not all inkers, however, use a brush as their primary tool. Some use pens, frequently varieties of crow-quills. Alex Toth inks his pencils with a variety of felt-tipped marking pens, using a brush to fill in areas of solid black.

Mike Grell did most of his early comic book inking exclusively with a brush, and only recently has he begun experimenting with pens. Mike now begins his inking with a pen, inking in the hands and fine facial detail before switching to a brush to flesh out the figures. Backgrounds are finished with either a radiograph or a brush, whichever Mike feels fits the requirements of the subject matter. Mike uses a smaller brush than most inkers (00 to 1), a Gillette 170 or 1290 penpoint, and adds zip-a-tone for special effects. •



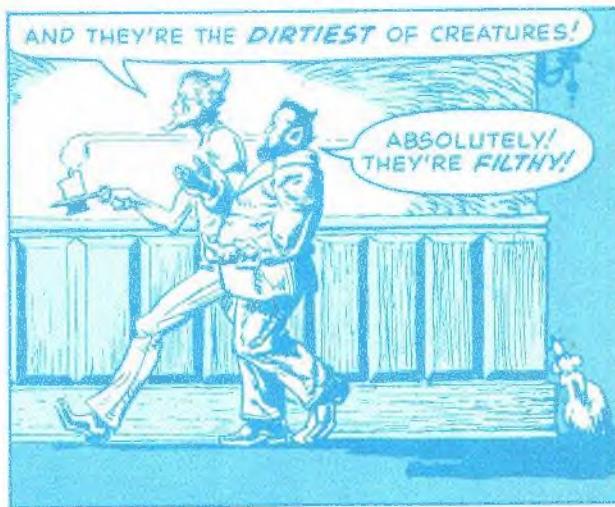
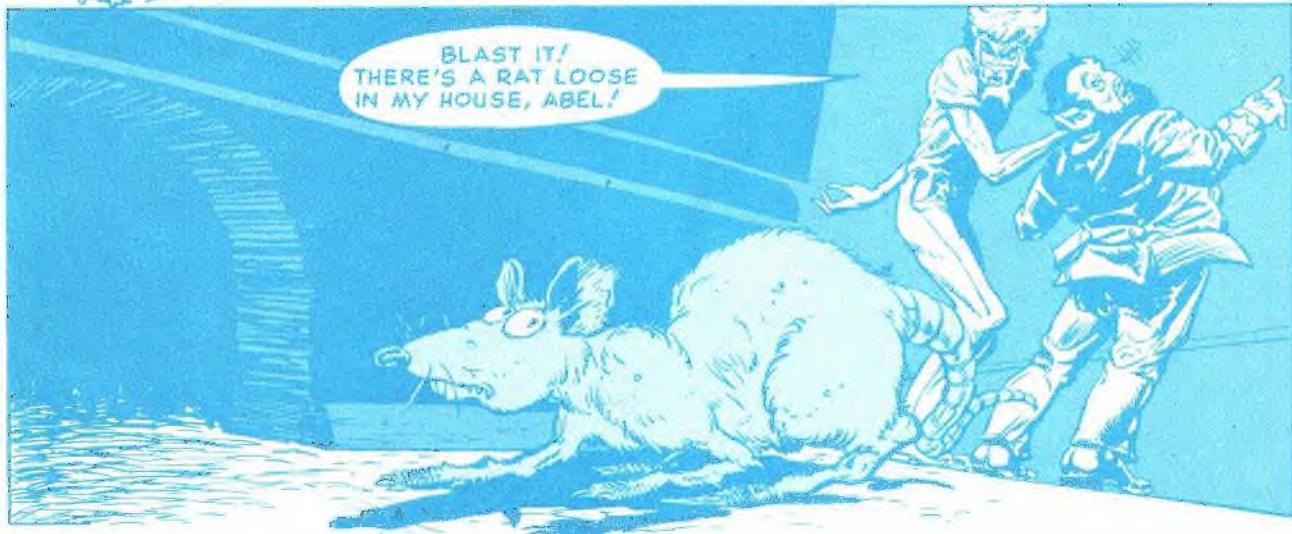
NEXT: "How a Comic Is Created" focuses on the production people and the myriad of tasks needed to ready the "finished" artwork for the engraving plant.



CAIN & ABEL



By JOHN ALBANO & MIKE KALUTA





DO YOU DARE ENTER...



THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY

